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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Decentralization of organizations within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/92/6, parts I and II).

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* A/48/50.

JIU/REP/92/6 (Part I)

ANNEX

DECENTRALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

PART I.: DECONCENTRATION AND MANAGERIAL PROCESSES

Prepared by
Adib Daoudy

Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
1992

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UN	United Nations
UN system	United Nations system of organizations
ACC	Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
CCAQ	Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (ACC Body)
CCSQ	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (ACC body)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
ITC	International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT)
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	United Nations Joint Inspection Unit
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNU	United Nations University
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO/AFRO	WHO Regional Office for Africa
WHO/AMRO/PAHO	WHO Regional Office for the Americas and Pan-American Health Organization
WHO/EMRO	WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
WHO/EURO	WHO Regional Office for Europe
WHO/SEARO	WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
WHO/WPRO	WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The significant evolution in the memberships of the UN system organizations since their creation has consecrated their universality. But because the seats of the organizations and of UN affiliated bodies are concentrated in Europe and North America, the UN system appears highly centralized in relation to its global membership and is more particularly remote from close to eighty per cent of its constituency: the peoples of the developing Member States. The present geographical pattern of headquarters' location which was historically conditioned and justified in the past may no longer be so.

The report reviews the decentralization efforts of individual organizations pursuant to the directives of the UN General Assembly and other governing bodies of the system. It concludes that progress towards effective decentralization of staff and delegation of authority from the organizations' headquarters to the field level, especially for the specialized agencies, has by and large been chequered and inadequate to secure sound management of and accountability for the large volume of technical co-operation activities executed by the agencies in the field. One major constraint in this regard has been the absence of a co-ordinated and strategic approach involving all the organizations represented at the level of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) which should have moved with more deliberate speed in giving operational expression to the directives of the General Assembly. CCSQ/OPS is now taking the very first steps in this direction, but much more remains to be done.

Another constraint concerns the absence of a decentralization ethos not only in relations between headquarters and the field but also within the organizations' headquarters where decision-making is in general centralized around executive heads. Moreover the limited use of the regular budgets in support of technical co-operation in some organizations and more particularly the distinction between technical co-operation financed primarily from extrabudgetary sources, and so called universal mandate comprising normative, regulatory functions supported by the regular budgets, have also placed brakes on effective decentralization towards the field. Yet another drawback is limited policy co-ordination on the issue within some individual Member States which adopt different positions in different organizations, and among the governing bodies of the system.

The report concludes that the vast challenges of famine, drought, AIDS, civil wars, uprooted and dislocated populations and deepening human misery in many parts of the World make dramatic demands on the UN system to strengthen significantly its field presence, as well as its operational capabilities and responsiveness. This would require bold efforts to redesign the delivery structures and methods of the organizations. To that end the report proposes that the UN Economic and Social Council in the context of its revitalized mandate and of global new challenges and in accordance with Articles 55, 62 and 63 of the UN Charter, should initiate studies and consultations with all relevant governing bodies of the UN development system in order to determine the feasibility of establishing UN system integrated and multidisciplinary regional development mechanisms akin to the structures of the Regional Development Banks and charged with the UN system's operational activities for development.

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The proposed regional arrangements which would enable the UN system to relate better to specific subregional and country situations, could, for example, incorporate the existing regional structures, including the regional economic commissions, as well as the divisions, services and units in the organizations' headquarters concerned with operational activities for development. The UN Economic and Social Council would serve as the global policy organ of the new structures. Their executive heads would be appointed by ACC and not more than forty per cent of their internationally-recruited professional staff should originate from any one region. The same ceiling is recommended for all existing field establishments of the UN system.

The second point on the agenda of decentralization should be a review of the present location of the seats of the organizations and the eventual relocation of some of them with a view to achieving a more global spread of the organizations' headquarters or some of their divisions.

Independent of the location or relocation of the organizations' headquarters, the conference function and the legislative sessions in particular should be used more often, following the practice in some organizations, to promote cross-cultural empathy with the peoples and cultures of the different regions. The report therefore sees merit in motivating Member States to host some major UN conferences and the periodic sessions of supreme policy organs on a rotating regional basis.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The subject of decentralization has been on the agenda of the United Nations and the larger specialized agencies virtually since their creation. Much of the debate on the subject has centred on ways and means of adapting the original organizational concept and structure of the UN system to the significant changes of the past forty-five years.

2. One of these changes has been the considerable growth in the membership of all the organizations of the system. The 51 original signatories to the UN Charter, excluding the People's Democratic Republic of China, today represent barely 30 per cent of UN membership and only about 10 per cent of the membership population. This expansion in membership has not only transformed the United Nations into a truly universal Organization but has also furnished its agenda with an entirely new set of priorities.

3. Foremost among these priorities are international development co-operation, environmental protection, peace-keeping and humanitarian relief operations. Almost non-existent forty-five years ago, these activities today account for a substantially greater portion of the total expenditures of the UN system. Because the original constitutions and organizational structures had not been designed to anticipate this exponential expansion of operational activities for development, the UN system as a whole and the specialized agencies more particularly, which should have been the catalyst of progress, appear instead to have been overtaken by the winds of change. However, the organizations are now seeking to adapt in varying degrees to the new world context.

4. The end of the cold war is yet another major development that has heightened pressure for a significant reform of the UN system. The prospects are now brighter than ever before for achieving more effective international co-operation on a wide spectrum of issues which had eluded global consensus: from the North-South dialogue, social and economic development and environmental protection to a post cold war peace and security agenda. These new realities clearly call for new organizational responses. For a system with a universal constituency one such response inevitably lies in physical and functional decentralization for the benefit of its entire membership.

5. Among the many directives of United Nations governing bodies on this subject General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 1977 and 44/211 of 1989 are of special relevance to this report. Resolution 32/1977, in chapter IV of its annex, provides for strengthening the role of the regional commissions as the "main general economic and social development centres within their respective regions". Resolution 44/211 calls upon the organizations of the system to decentralize resources and delegate authority from headquarters to the regional and country levels so as to strengthen the quality and timeliness of programme delivery. The governing bodies of FAO, ILO, ITU, UNESCO and WHO have also adopted specific measures to promote decentralization.

6. Actions taken by the organizations in response to these legislative injunctions are anything but thorough and uniform. Within the United Nations, implementation of resolution 32/197 did

not result in strengthening complementarities and eliminating duplication between headquarters departments and the regional commissions, nor in any agreement in the course of fifteen years on decentralization of responsibilities and resources to the regions. The new restructuring exercise now in progress takes as its starting point, like fifteen years ago in the context of resolution 32/197, the reorganization of headquarters departments in a "first phase". However, in his 1992 report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General declares his intention to extend the reform process to other parts of the United Nations to achieve an "Organization-wide distribution of responsibilities and balance between functions performed at Headquarters and those carried out by the regional commissions and other United Nations organs and programmes". The Secretary-General also expresses in the same report his "firm belief that the focus of the United Nations must remain in the field where economic, social and political decisions take effect".

7. Other United Nations entities such as UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, etc., which have developed co-operative relations within the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) have made progress in physical and functional decentralization of resources and activities, as would be required by their essentially funding and operational mandates.

8. The picture is less consistent for the specialized agencies which form the hard technological wedge of the common system. The point frequently made by some organizations in this group is that their scope for decentralization is limited by the very nature of their constitutional functions. The relatively smaller agencies with less than 200 professional staff remain highly centralized. Among the larger agencies, WHO, the most decentralized, is a special case which is reviewed more elaborately in a separate JIU report. In UNESCO, at whose request the present study was initiated, decentralization was a priority item on the agenda of the April 1991 session of the Executive Board which debated an in-depth study prepared by its special Committee on the organization's field offices. Following the review of this study, the General Conference (25 C/Resolution 15.22) and Executive Board (136 EX/36, 3.3) adopted measures to guide and strengthen the process of decentralization in UNESCO. Actions taken by the Director-General pursuant to these directives are discussed at a later stage in this report. In requesting the JIU to undertake a system-wide study of the subject, UNESCO wished to draw lessons from the decentralization policies and practices of other specialized Agencies. FAO, ILO and ITU are three other agencies that have reviewed their programmes and structures in the recent past with a view to strengthening their field presence and role.

9. These reform efforts are commendable. But they appear isolated, unsynchronized and uneven in depth and compass. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) as a whole which desirably should have been in the forefront of the reform process has seemed to lag behind the JCGP organizations which are pursuing bold programme restructuring efforts. This comparison exposes a fissure between the JCGP members comprising mainly funding UN organizations on the one hand and the specialized, technical members of the ACC on the other. Efforts at decentralization cannot be thorough and effective unless carried through a co-ordinated and system-wide strategic approach to the delivery of field programmes and activities.

10. The present haphazard approaches to decentralization are duplicative, especially in infrastructural and staff costs, horizontally among the organizations and vertically within individual organizations supporting field activities at the country, regional and headquarters

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levels. A more strategic and rationalized deployment of resources not only holds promise for significant savings in establishment and staff costs but also will significantly solidify the comparative advantages of the United Nations system on the ground vis-à-vis the multilateral financial institutions.

11. Such a comprehensive and uniform approach is made all the more essential by the new guidelines on operational activities for development of the UN system contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989. These guidelines emphasize among other things government and national execution, full utilization of national capacities, programme approach as opposed to sector-specific project approaches. simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures governing the programming processes and project cycles as well as of the roles of the organizations' country offices, delegation of authority from headquarters to the country level, increased team-leadership capacity of the Resident Co-ordinator coupled with a clarified and strengthened ACC mandate in this regard, and closer co-operation of the system's country representation with the Resident Co-ordinator.

12. These directives bear directly on the substance and goal of decentralization since they cannot be implemented fully without the outposting of staff and delegation of authority to the field. The Inspector has drawn on previous JIU reports on the subject but has broadened the scope of his inquiry to include for the first time a review of the geographical distribution of the seats of the organizations. The concept of decentralization used in this report includes deconcentration and managerial aspects. The Inspector hopes that the report will make a useful contribution to the on-going debate on reform of the UN system so as to redeploy and equip the organizations to serve as an effective international centrepiece for the next century.

13. Chapter II. reviews the geographical spread of the organizations to the extent that their present location and concentration have implications for their effectiveness in relating to their global constituency and supporting operational activities for development. Chapter III. looks at decentralization from the view point of the development co-operation role of the organizations. Chapter IV. outlines a possible strategic reorganization of the development related structures and resources of the system. Conclusions and recommendations follow in chapter V.

14. Part II of this report subtitled "Comparative Approaches", which is contained in a separate volume, reviews the decentralization policies, approaches and experiences in individual organizations of the system. This second part, which serves as an addendum, should be read together with Part I. The Inspector records his thanks to all those throughout the UN system who provided views and documentation in the course of his visits to several headquarters and to the field.

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II. GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

15. The present chapter views decentralization in geostrategic perspective. It seeks to answer a fundamental question: how decentralized or universal is the UN system in terms of the present location of the headquarters, resources and activities of the organizations? The question is inescapable because of the profound growth in the membership, universality and activities of the organizations since their inception in the 1940's. To remain relevant in the course of time every organization must continually readapt itself to its changing environment in order to interact better with its constituency. Depending on the nature and size of its activities or the expectations of its members, an organization's location and geographical deployment can strengthen or inhibit its overall effectiveness or influence its perception and approaches to problems. Which is why any discussion of the ways and means of making the UN system ever more relevant to the priority concerns of its entire membership must start with a candid analysis of deconcentration issues.

A. Location of headquarters

16. The table on page 5 shows the main UN regions, as well as countries and cities hosting the headquarters of the organizations of the UN system. The last column to the right lists UN affiliated bodies which could have been located in any region or country. This list therefore excludes UN regional economic commissions and other regional or subregional offices of the system with a specific geographical focus and mandate. The table reveals that all the organizations of the system are currently headquartered in Europe and North America and that the same holds true for the location of UN affiliated bodies, with the exception of Africa where Kenya hosts the UN Environment Programme and the UN Centre for Human Settlements. Other minor exceptions are Asia and the Pacific region where the United Nations University is located in Tokyo and Latin America and the Caribbean, where the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In terms, therefore, of the location of the seats of the organizations the UN system appears highly centralized in relation to its global membership.

17. The reason for this geographical concentration of the UN system headquarters would seem to be mainly historical. European and North American Member States were not only the principal architects of the UN system but also formed the majority of the original membership of most of the organizations. Moreover, the UN system itself is by and large a successor to erstwhile essentially European institutions such as the League of Nations (1919), the International Labour Organisation (1919), International Telecommunication Union (1865), World Meteorological Organization (1873) or the Universal Postal Union (1874), etc. Equally important is the fact that in the 1940s Europe could justifiably be considered the centre of the world with its colonial dependencies across the globe, while the United States emerged from the second world war as the foremost architect of the UN Charter and, together with the former Soviet Union, as guarantor of world peace and security. These factors explain the original concentration of the UN system in Europe and North America.

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LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

REGION	COUNTRY AND CITY	ORGANIZATIONS HEADQUARTERS	UN AFFILIATED BODIES
AFRICA	KENYA Nairobi		UNEP UNCHS
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	JAPAN Tokyo		UNU
EUROPE	AUSTRIA Vienna	IAEA UNIDO	UNOV UNDCP UNRWA
	FRANCE Paris	UNESCO	
	ITALY Rome	FAO IFAD	WFP WFC UNICRI
	THE NETHERLANDS The Hague		ICJ
	UNITED KINGDOM London	IMO	
	SWITZERLAND Bern	UPU	
	Geneva	GATT ILO ITU WHO WIPO WMO	UNOG UNHCR ITC UNCTAD UNRISD UNIDIR
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Santo Domingo		INSTRAW
NORTH AMERICA	UNITED STATES New York	UN	UNDP UNICEF UNFPA UNITAR
	Washington	IBRD (Group) IMF	
	CANADA Montreal	ICAO	

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18. The world scene of 1992 bears little if any comparison with that of 1945-1950 when the UN system came into being. The end of the cold war has depolarized international security concerns and displaced emphasis from armaments to preventive, collective action through the Security Council. A consensus is emerging that the UN system should play an ever increasing role and that social and economic development and co-operation, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and accountable, democratic systems of governance should in future form the bulwark of peace and security, resting on the effective involvement of the entire UN membership. The practical application of this new world agenda requires the organizations to intensify their interactions with all Member States. Such interactions would be enhanced by a more deliberate spread of the organizations.

19. The share of World economic output and scale of assessed contributions to the budgets of the organizations may not be sufficient justification for the present pattern of headquarters location. If such criteria were decisive Germany, Japan and the Russian Federation would be among the foremost candidates to host some of the organizations. Indispensable and important as they may be to the functioning and mission of the UN system, economic and financial considerations should not detract from the more important substantive attributes of the system: its lofty charter ideals and universality, equality of nations, neutrality, multicultural pluralism and democratic value system, which form its conceptual and legal foundation as the pivot of international relations. These unique attributes carry no price tag.

20. Within Europe itself the present physical configuration of the organizations may no longer be justified in the post cold-war era. The erstwhile important concept and status of neutral states have been eroded as criteria for locating neutral international organizations. Northern European countries which are among the most active UN members and generous promoters of its objectives do not host a single organization. Also, Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States could especially now be considered potential home to significant UN system presence to help support their political and economic transformations.

21. In relation to the global constituency of the organizations, their present location appears even more skewed. They are all geographically distant from close to 80 per cent of their constituency comprising the populations of the developing Member States. Much of the long-standing debate and voluminous documentation of the system on decentralization and co-ordination derive from this anomaly of the organizations' physical remoteness from the developing countries. The establishment and extension of field office networks has not redressed this hemispheric imbalance. There is no doubt that the present headquarters locations have very well served the organizations and their Member States for the past forty-seven years. But the absorptive capacity of some of these locations may now be under strain, and some countries in the southern hemisphere and elsewhere have made adequate progress to serve as hosts to some of the organizations.

22. However, the location of an organization may not be of great consequence depending on its geostrategic spread such as by national civil services or on how effectively it employs the means at its disposal to interact with its constituency in order to attain its objectives. The following paragraphs therefore review the extent of deconcentration of the organizations' resources and selected activities.

B. Financial resources

23. Total expenditures in 1990 by organizations of the system, excluding IBRD group and IMF, amounted to US$7.5 billion ($2.3 billion from regular assessed budgets and $5.2 billion from extrabudgetary and voluntary sources).[1] The geographical distribution of these expenditures is hard to determine with any degree of precision. A rough guide is provided by the share of these

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[1] ACC/1992/FB/R.20

expenditures allocated to operational activities for development. That share stood at $3.7 billion[2] in 1990, or about 50 per cent of total expenditures. This would imply that the 4 billion peoples of the developing countries received in 1990 a per capita income value of US$0.9 from the organizations of the system. A regional breakdown of development-related expenditures for 1989 is provided in figure 1 (page 9).

24. These data are however not a very reliable guide as to the actual locus of expenditure and accrued benefits to the extent that development and humanitarian activities are administered for the most part by headquarters personnel and supported by equipment, supplies and services procured mainly from the developed countries. Furthermore, over 70 per cent of these expenditures are attributed to four UN bodies: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and WFP.

25. Development-related expenditures financed from the organizations' regular budgets, which are more stable and predictable and on which extrabudgetary programmes are dependent for their effectiveness and impact, may be more suggestive of the organizations' world-wide commitment to their development mission. Figure 2 (page 10) reveals that the organizations incurred in 1990 US$233.9 million from their regular budgets for technical co-operation expenditure. This amount represents only 10 per cent of their total regular budget expenditures for that year. WHO which alone accounts for 45 per cent of these expenditures also happens, not by coincidence, to be the most decentralized among the specialized agencies. Indeed, technical co-operation is a key-stone in the Constitution of WHO as it is not in the basic texts of most other technical agencies (see chapter III). Its field-based technical co-operation structures and programmes absorb upwards of 60 per cent of the regular budget, a level which has not yet been matched by any other agency.

26. In their comments on the draft of this report some agencies pointed out that WHO alone includes staff in its regular technical co-operation expenditures, and that many important regular budget activities are not reported by the agencies as technical assistance, such as UNESCO's scientific programmes. It was also observed that the agencies contribute a regular budget "subsidy" to project implementation. UNESCO estimates this contribution at US$200 million for all technical agencies, which quantify their actual assessed-budget contributions to technical co-operation at between 40-50 per cent of all regular programme funds. Should that be the case more decentralization would be justified, not less.

27. Unlike expenditures on operational activities for development which are significantly decentralized among the developing countries, headquarters' related expenditures are inevitably concentrated in those countries hosting more than one organization, namely the United States, Switzerland, Austria and Italy. For the United States and Switzerland, for which estimates[3] are available, economic benefits of hosting the organizations are valued for each country at US$1 billion annually, or a per capita gain of US$4.2 for the United States and US$156 for Switzerland. The implication is that a deconcentration of the organizations would also further spread out the economic benefits of their location. These benefits become more substantial when the organizations' investments of all sorts are factored, particularly pension fund investments whose market value in 1990 was US$8.56 billion.

28. Figure 3 (page 11) exhibits the distribution of these investments as follows in descending order of US$ million: North America - 3,730 (43.6%); Europe - 2,640 (30.9%); Asia - 1,480 (17.2%); International Institutions - 318 (3.7%); Latin America - 270 (3.2%); and Africa - 120 (1.4%). Fund investments in all of Eastern Europe came to $39 million, or 1.5% of the total for Europe, while Australia, Japan and New Zealand accounted for 70% of the total for Asia. For all developing countries total fund investments amounted to US$831 million or 9.7% of the aggregate total.

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[2] DP/1991/69

[3] International Herald Tribune: May 26, 1992
La Tribune de Genève: June 17, 1992

29. Several organizations have pointed out that the management of the UN Joint Pension Fund is irrelevant to the subject of this report because neither the technical criteria guiding fund investments (e.g. safety, convertibility and profitability) nor the wisdom of the investments committee could possibly be challenged. But this report in no way suggests that those criteria be modified for the sake of decentralization. The question that may be relevant is whether, as repeatedly urged by the General Assembly, opportunities for investment diversification are systematically sought in all regions. The following correlation is moreover noteworthy: fund investments and the organizations' sources of procurement of equipment and services, despite recent improvements, are concentrated in the same countries and regions where the seats of the organizations are located. In these examples - fund investments, procurement sources and location of headquarters - the Nordic countries, Eastern Europe and the developing countries are all under-utilized. The organizations are physically and substantively remote from these regions.

C. Staff resources

30. Figure 4 (page 12) illustrates the degree of decentralization of the organizations' total human resources in 1990. It shows that UN system staff per million inhabitants in the five regions numbered: North America - 30; Europe - 25; Africa - 21; Latin America - 8; and Asia - 2. These figures need to be qualified with the observation that close to 80 per cent of staff in the developing regions consist of extrabudgetary staff, project staff or national staff employed by the organizations. Figure 5 (page 13) is a more accurate index to the degree of decentralization of the organizations' regular professional staff. This figure shows that the JCGP organizations which are concerned almost wholly with operational activities for development have outposted an average of 77.7 per cent of their staff away from headquarters. Excluding WHO with 59 per cent of decentralized staff, the technical agencies have from 0-23 per cent of their regular staff outposted to the field.

31. These agencies argue that their constitutional and highly technical functions do not lend themselves to decentralization. While this argument may be partly valid, especially for the very small agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the example of the World Health Organization's decentralized model shows that decentralization is not necessarily incompatible with the highly technical nature of these organization's mandates. Moreover, their present level of decentralization is not adequate to ensure proper management of and accountability for the large volume of technical cooperation activities funded from various sources and implemented by these agencies in many parts of the world.

32. The financial costs of decentralization in a period of zero - growth budgets for all the organizations are frequently invoked as perhaps the most important obstacle to significant outposting of staff from the headquarters to the field. The cost of moving a staff member at P4 step 1 with two dependants is estimated, for example, at about US$30.000 from New York to Buenos Aires or at almost US$25,000 from Geneva to New Delhi. Infrastructural costs, such as for the establishment of office premises, are not included as these are provided free of charge in some cases by the developing countries. The Inspector acknowledges the initial cost implications of outposting staff but believes these costs can be substantially reduced through optimal use of common premises and services, as well as by reduced travel expenditures of headquarters staff on frequent field missions. The Inspector came upon an example in one organization whereby one field project was visited 15 times by different headquarters staff within 18 months.

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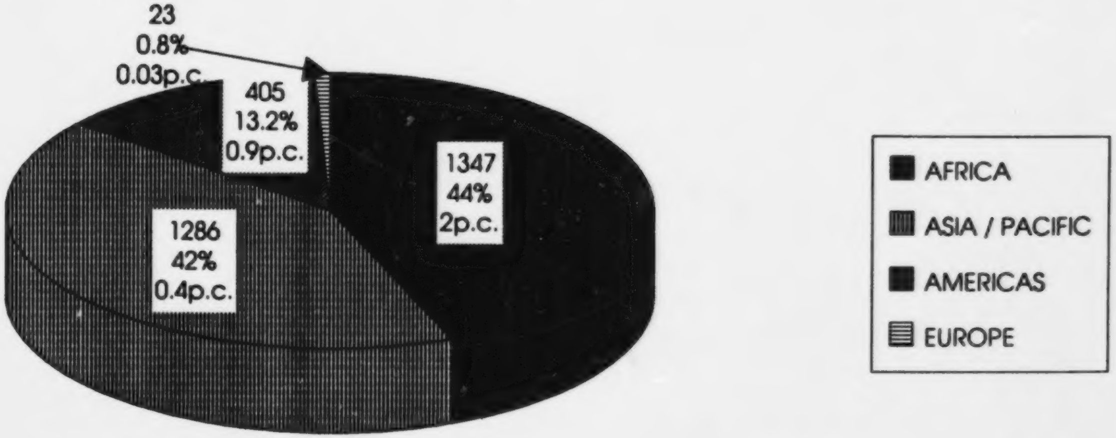
Figure 1 : EXPENDITURES ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM : 1989
(REGIONAL SUMMARY)
(In US $ millions and percentage)



Source of data : A / 46 / 206 / Add. 1

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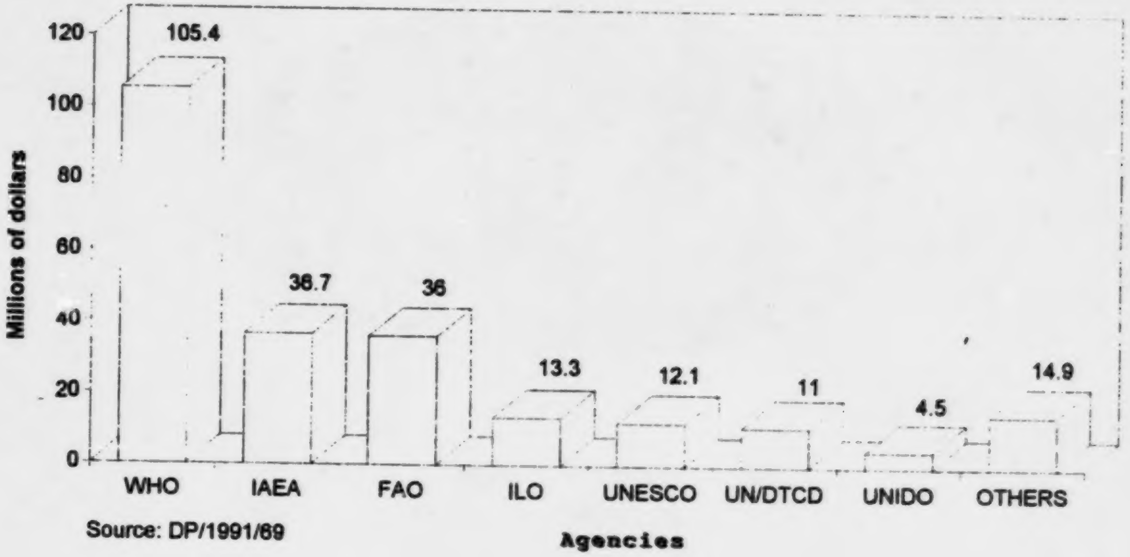
Figure 2: Distribution of regular budget technical co-operation expenditures by the specialized agencies in 1990, in millions of US dollars



Source: DP/1991/69

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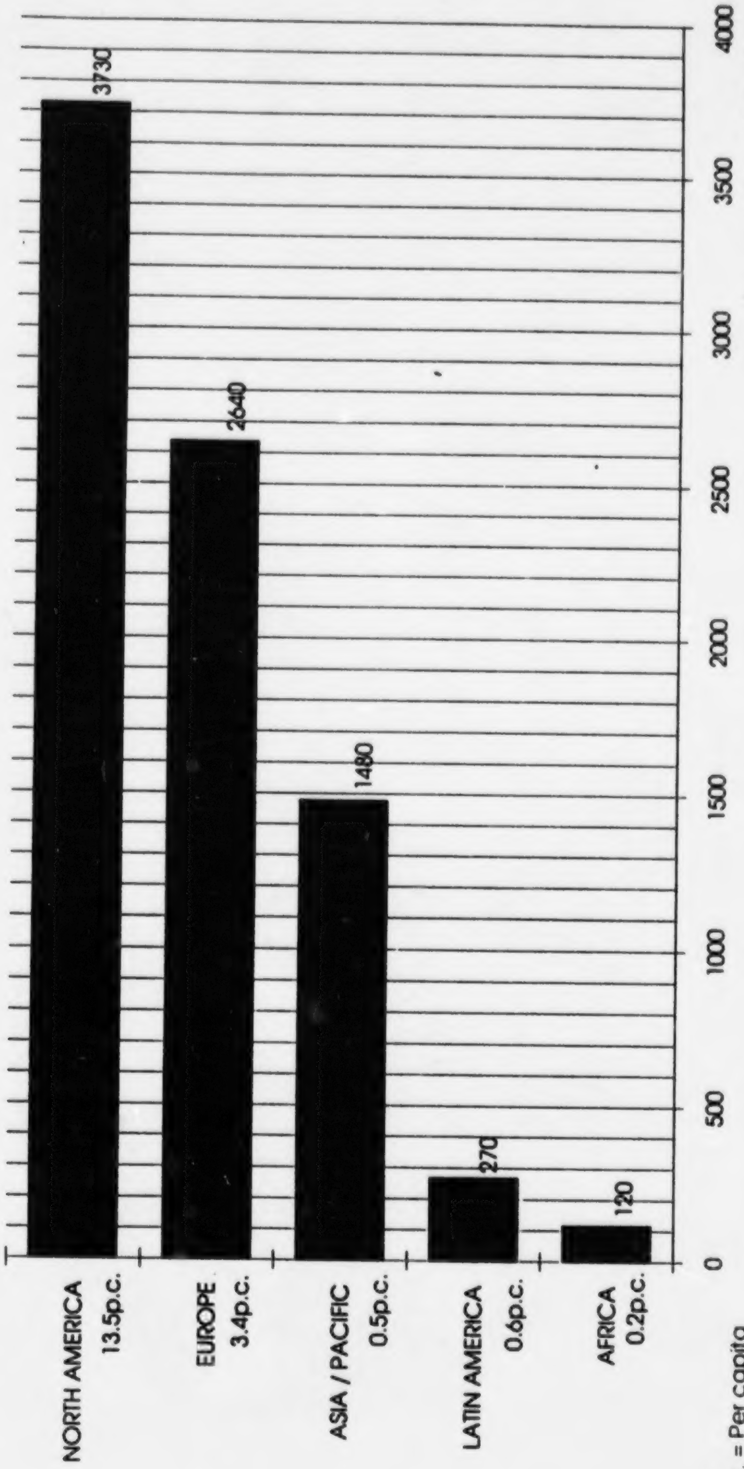
Figure 3 : TOTAL UNITED NATIONS PENSION FUND BY REGION OF INVESTMENT AS AT 31 MARCH 1990

(In millions of US dollars)



Source : A / c . 5 / 45 / 7

p.c. = Per capita

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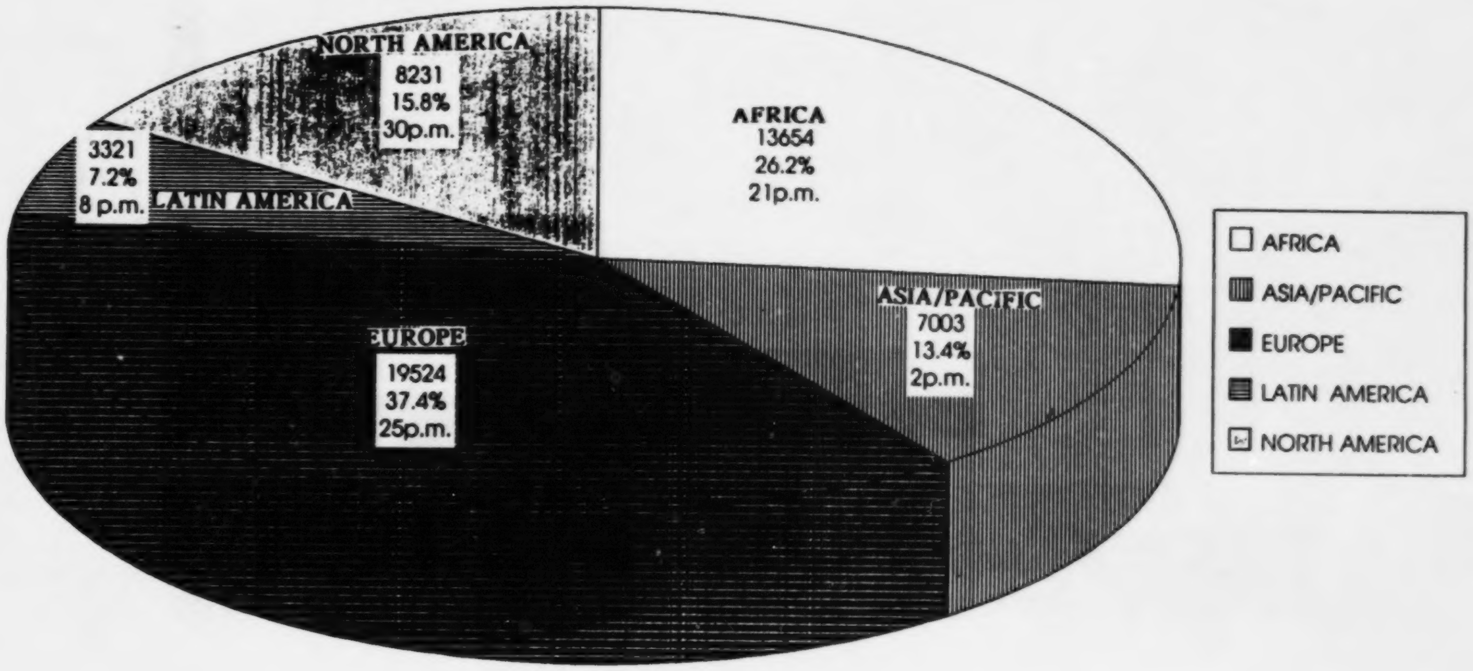
Figure 4 : TOTAL UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF BY DUTY STATION
(1990 REGIONAL SUMMARY)



p.m. = Per million inhabitants

Source of data : CCAQ 1990 personnel statistics

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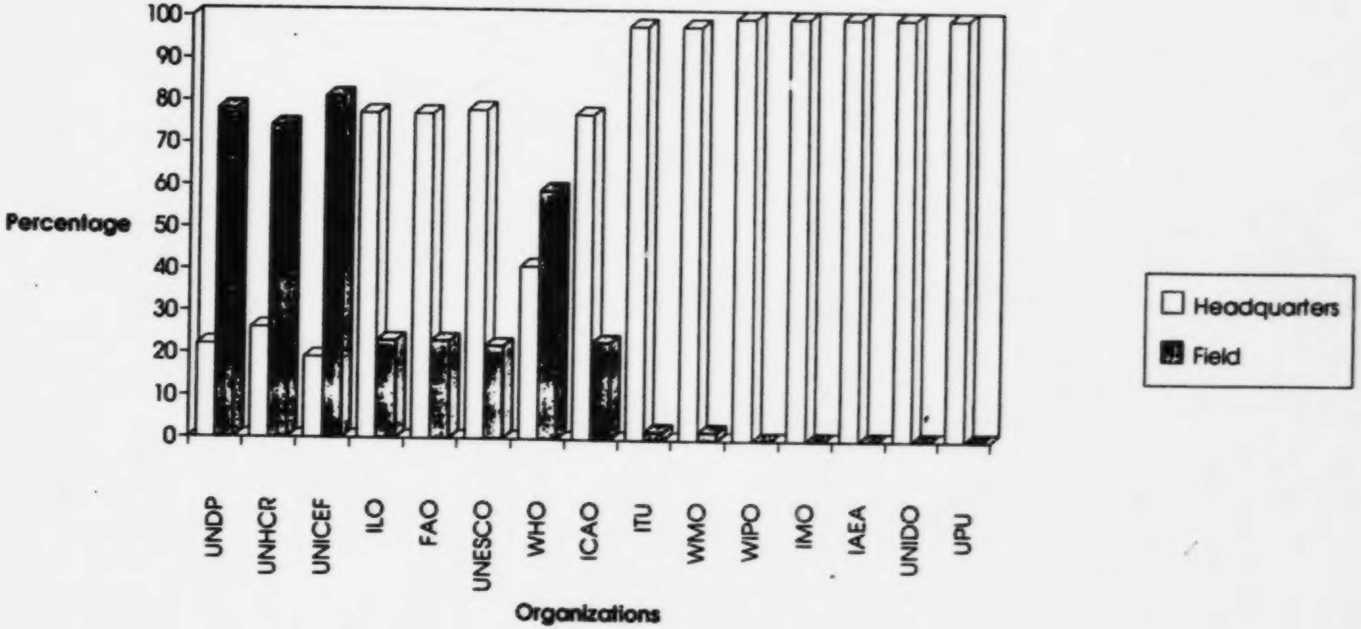
Figure 5 : Distribution of United Nations system regular staff between headquarters and field in 1989



Source of data : A / 46 / 206 / Add. 3

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33. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 (pages 15 and 16) which provide data on staff costs at different duty stations reveal that it would be far less expensive for the organizations to have staff at field duty stations than at their present headquarters. These figures are particularly instructive with regard to the frequently heard contention by some Member States and the organizations about the significant cost implications of decentralization. The data show for example that, Geneva which hosts a high concentration of the organizations and staff, happens to be the most expensive in terms of salary costs. The cost of a staff member at P4/1 with two dependent children at Geneva in January 1991 was almost double the average cost of a staff member at similar grade employed in New Delhi, Manila or Warsaw. Because general service staff currently represent 64.4 per cent of total UN system staff, their comparative costs at different duty stations are suggestive of the significant savings that can be derived by Member States from relocation of some of the organizations and staff decentralization. The cost of one general service staff at top grade employed at Geneva for example in January 1991 was adequate to employ 2 of the same in Buenos Aires, 3 in Tunis or Warsaw, 7 in Nairobi, 9 in New Delhi and 10 in Manila. These comparative data do not include the costs to the organizations of education grant and medical insurance schemes which are considerably higher at present headquarters locations than at field duty stations.

34. More fundamentally, decentralization as proposed in this report, while implying evident start-up costs, should ultimately conduce to savings in establishment and overhead costs. The proposed approach would imply reform of structures, procedures and even staff profiles to promote and apply the new modalities for technical cooperation. The organizations argue, rightly, that their scope for action is limited by arrears in assessed contributions totalling close to US$2 billion at present and by a zero-growth budget ceiling. But the Inspector notes that the total field staff (about 24,000) of the organizations of the common system are presently more than double the total staff (about 11,000) employed by the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

35. The four Banks in question now deliver, in addition to their central statutory functions, more technical assistance than the UN common system excluding emergency relief expenditures. When headquarters-based technical co-operation staff (over 3000) are included in this comparison, the result shows that the common system of organizations appears clearly over-manned relative to the level of resources delivered, no doubt because the bewildering fragmentation of field programmes and structures as well as decentralization approaches has considerably jacked up overhead costs. For example, in FAO alone there are no less than six overlapping layers of decentralization in support of field operations (see Part II, chapter V). The main thesis therefore is that a more streamlined and concerted approach to decentralization in support of operational activities for development and other statutory activities would result in significant savings, not costs (see also chapter IV).

36. A more valid explanation for the concentration of staff at headquarters is, firstly, that technical co-operation priorities are not yet fully integrated with the regular programmes of some organizations, and secondly that the organizations are located in the most economically advanced and therefore attractive regions of the world. The Inspector noted in the course of this study a strong resistance to staff decentralization to the developing regions. Some headquarters staff, especially of the specialized agencies, have grown accustomed and even wedded to the host country milieu. For various personal reasons such as children's education, comfortable standard of living, climate suitability, fear of tropical diseases, investment in real estate, etc., many headquarters staff in the agencies are reluctant to accept field assignments of any protracted length. Field service is not considered as "prestigious" as headquarters tenure, particularly if it carries no built-in career advancement prospects.

D. Information Resources

37. Decentralization is an obvious vehicle for more effective dissemination of the organizations' information resources comprising scientific, technical and general knowledge stored in bibliographic, electronic or mechanical form. Thus defined, information is without doubt one of the organizations' most precious products and their primary medium of technological diffusion. In some respects this product is unique in the world: it is neutral and objective (or supposed to be so); it cannot be

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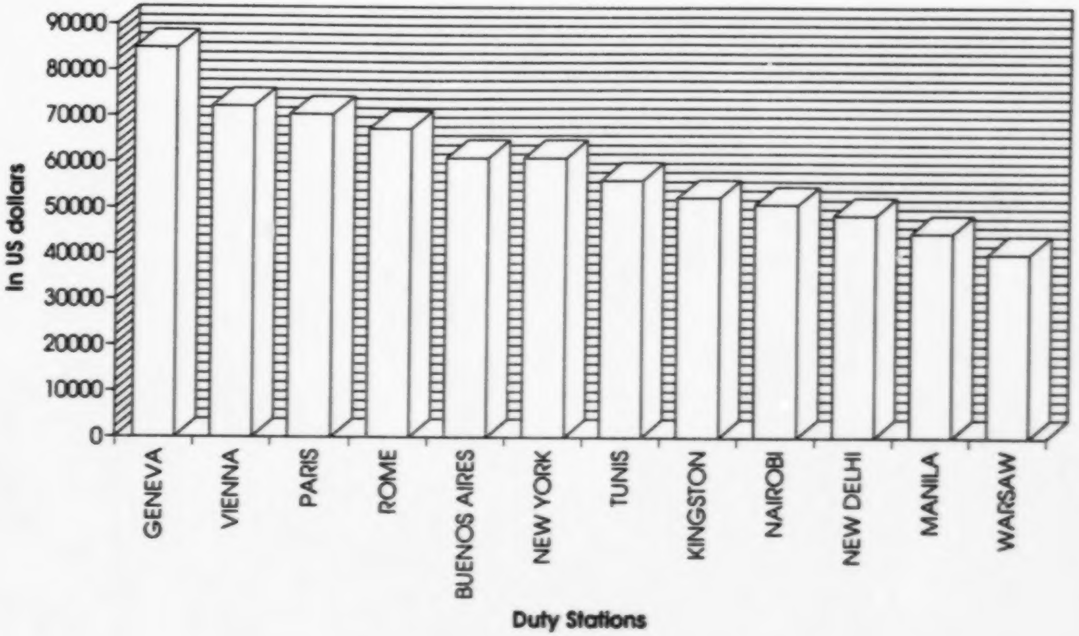
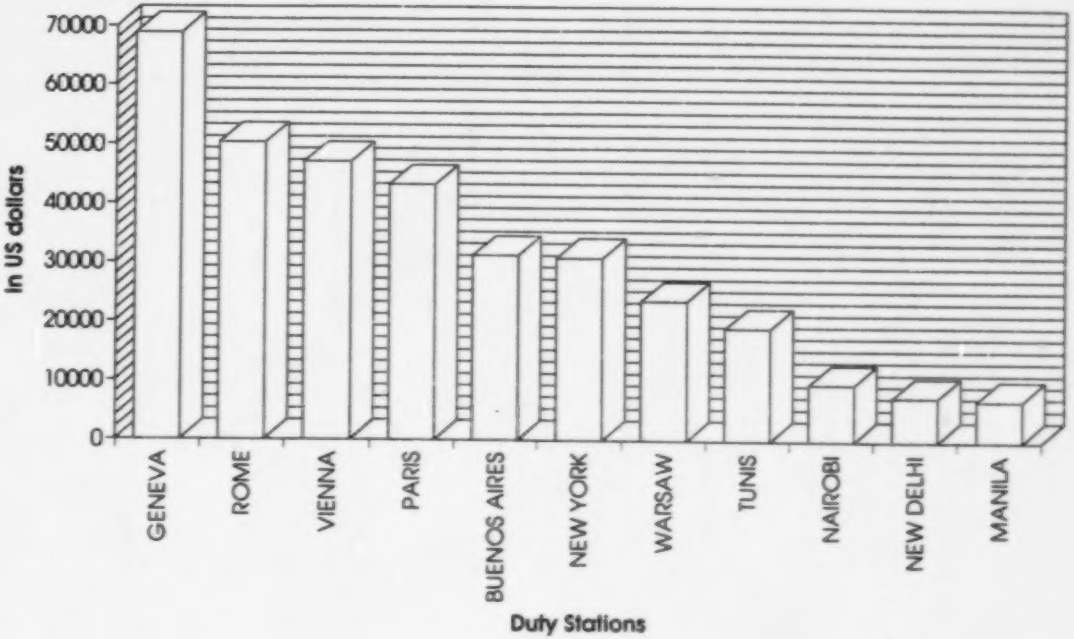
Figure 6.1 : UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COSTS AT DIFFERENT DUTY STATIONS P4 / 1 WITH SPOUSE AND TWO DEPENDENT CHILDREN AS AT 1 JANUARY 1991



Source of data : United Nations Office at Geneva, Financial Resource Management Service.
At the request of the Joint Inspection Unit

Figure 6.2 : UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COSTS AT DIFFERENT DUTY STATIONS GS 7 / 1 OR EQUIVALENT WITH SPOUSE AND TWO DEPENDENT CHILDREN AS AT 1 JANUARY 1991



Source of data : United Nations Office at Geneva, Financial Resource Management Service, At the request of the Joint Inspection Unit

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obtained easily from other sources, and most important, it is usually the "last word" on any subject matter dealt with. It can thus be likened to a treasure chest for the scientific, academic and general intellectual community of the localities, countries and regions hosting the organizations.

38. For evident reasons these resources are now concentrated in the libraries and databases at the organizations' headquarters in Europe and North America. The Inspector could not assess the extent to which information resources are organized to back up operational activities for development or to facilitate their accessibility to the developing countries. The organizations' information systems (e.g. FAO/AGRIS, ASFIS, IAEA/INIS, UNEP/INFOTERA, UNIDO/INTIB, etc.) are considered by some experts[4] as too sophisticated for the developing countries having in most cases only rudimentary information and communication infrastructure and different languages. A recent JIU report on UN system libraries also underscores this point. The examples of UN regional commissions, UN information centres and WHO regional offices which are major repositories of information resources in the developing regions show that the more decentralized the organization the more easily it can bring information as close as possible to its constituency, through simple, conventional approaches.

E. Conference activities

39. Major conferences staged by the organizations, and especially periodic sessions of their governing bodies, represent a flexible and expedient tool for the organizations to interact with their memberships and peoples.

40. UN document A/AC.172/133 of February 1990 entitled "Calendar of Conferences and Meetings of the United Nations for 1990-1991" shows that UN system conference activities programmed for 1990-1991 were concentrated at the headquarters of the organizations in New York, Geneva, Rome and Vienna. In contrast to the practice in other intergovernmental organizations, notably the European Economic Community, Organization of American States, Organization of African Unity, Arab League, Association of South East Asian Nations, or IBRD/IMF and the Regional Banks, UN system governing bodies very seldom meet away from the organizations' headquarters, with the exception of ITU, UPU, UNCTAD and WHO's Regional Committees, but not the World Health Assembly or Executive Board. Even the governing bodies more specifically concerned with economic and social development issues, such as the UN Economic and Social Council, UNDP Governing Council, UNICEF Executive Board, etc., have not had the opportunity to meet more often outside New York and Geneva.

41. The Inspector recognizes that conferences and meetings held outside the established headquarters do imply additional costs to the organizations, which UN General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 1985 is intended to avoid by providing that:

> "UN bodies may hold sessions away from established headquarters when a Government issuing an invitation for a session to be held within its territory has agreed to defray, after consultation with the Secretary-General as to their nature and possible extent, the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved".

42. The key question is calculating "the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved". The Inspector understands that inviting governments try to negotiate down such costs and that there appears to be a lack of understanding between these governments and UN conference staff as to what it takes to host a UN conference which must be governed by the same regulations wherever it is held. The UN Committee on Conferences and other governing bodies of the system may wish to take another hard look at the present principles and regulations governing the choice of venue for conferences in general and their legislative sessions in particular. Member States should be actively

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[4] See report of the International Symposium on Training and Technology Transfer, Nancy, May 1980.

encouraged to host special conferences and legislative sessions of the organizations, which could devise a more imaginative and perhaps economical system of calculating additional costs to be borne by potential host governments, without prejudice to established standards of efficiency.

43. The current method of estimating additional costs generally tends to financially penalize rather than encourage governments wishing to host UN conferences. For example, the cost of moving a large complement of headquarters conference servicing personnel, particularly language and documentation staff, as well as equipment to support conferences held away from headquarters could be reduced substantially through greater reliance on conference services, especially interpreters and translators, of the host country or region, modern communications technology, if they exist and are adequate, and in particular more rigorous advance planning procedures including drilling of local conference personnel by the organizations' secretariats. Current agreements administered by CCAQ between the organizations and language unions[5] implanted at headquarters duty stations may be an obstacle to the expanded use of local conference services of inviting governments, thereby narrowing the cost reduction options available to the organizations. These associations traditionally require the recruitment of their registered members and the application of remuneration rates established in advance by agreement with organizations of the system.

44. While the developed Members States can host UN system conferences and legislative sessions without much difficulty and should therefore be encouraged to continue to do so, the same may not be true for most developing Member States, more particularly the least developed category, who may need both encouragement and leverage to enable them to meet additional costs. Sponsorship could come from several sources, including the donor community and private sectors while special rates could be negotiated with airline companies and hotel chains.

45. There is no doubt that special conferences and legislative sessions of the system constitute a ready and effective means for the organizations to promote cross-cultural empathy and understanding with the different peoples and regions of their constituency. Since that is one of the major goals of decentralization it would seem reasonable to use the conference function much more frequently than hitherto to achieve that goal. The Inspector therefore recommends that the governing bodies should consider the option of establishing the principle of meeting outside headquarters and, to the extent possible, on a rotating regional basis.

46. While the objective of physical decentralization of the organizations cannot be reduced to obtaining a more equitable distribution of the tangible and intangible benefits of headquarters location, the foregoing paragraphs leave no doubt that those benefits are so substantial that their implications for the universal membership of the organizations need to be discussed following the democratic tradition and practices of the system. Two such implications may be worthy of mention.

47. Firstly, the present concentration of the organizations has signified for the past forty-seven years a significant disproportion of representational and duty travel costs borne, on the one hand, by the host countries and, on the other, by all other countries. That disproportion remains valid, if to a lesser degree, between Member States in regions hosting the organizations and all other Member States, particularly the developing Member States whose representational costs in some of the most expensive cities hosting the organizations would seem to follow an inverse proportion to their scales of assessed contributions.

48. Secondly, the principle of local recruitment of general service staff, as actually applied in several headquarters locations where the first cardinal requirement is proof of local residency, practically excludes nationals from outside the host countries and regions from competing for general service recruitment unless they are locally resident. For those nationals, local residency is a vanishing likelihood as the host countries increasingly tighten the screws on foreign immigration.

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[5] Two of these unions are: International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and International Association of Conference Translators (AITC); both of which use French acronyms

Since the general service category represents two-thirds of all headquarters staff, the implication is that two out of every three posts in the organizations' headquarters are potentially inaccessible to nationals in countries and regions not privileged to host the organizations.

49. Also worth mentioning is the significant political prestige and sheer publicity accruing to the host cities and countries, especially today that the UN system has regained all its vigour and sheen. Since the organizations are in effect the collective instrument and common weal of all Member States, decentralization should be considered in that context and headquarters location should explicitly and implicitly benefit all Member States, balancing to the extent possible their legitimate membership rights and interests.

50. The Inspector therefore sees the need for the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to develop uniform minimum criteria to be fulfilled by Member States desiring to host the organizations. The criteria should clearly reflect the benefits to be derived by all Member States, the organizations and staff in moving an organization or some of its activities to any given location in the world, and should include the proviso that inviting Member States would provide rent-free premises and to a great extent bear removal and installation costs.

51. The need for standard criteria for relocating the organizations is particularly important in at least three respects. Firstly, such criteria could serve as terms of reference for a thorough feasibility study of the prospective city and country of location, since some basic conditions must be satisfied, such as racial tolerance and harmony, efficiency of transport and communications infrastructure, political and social stability, cost and standard of living, absorptive capacity, etc.

52. Secondly, the criteria would redress the present discrepancies between advantages enjoyed by the organizations and their staff in some Member States, which provide rent-free premises and grant diplomatic status to all internationally-recruited professional staff, on the one hand, and other Member States which neither provide rent-free premises nor grant diplomatic status in the same way, on the other. Thirdly, the criteria should form the basis for competitive bidding by Member States wishing to host any organization of the system. Once relocated an organization could remain in place for a minimum period of 25 years before it can be subject for another discussion for a relocation bidding procedure. This means that constitutional amendments will be necessary for those organizations (ITU, WIPO and UNIDO) whose basic texts specify where their seats should be located.

53. In the judgment of the Inspector, the present world context is just about the right time to consider deconcentrating the organizations and their headquarters functions. The objective should be to achieve a more global pattern of headquarters' location. Organizations and/or Departments wholly concerned with development related issues should, as a general principle, move some of their headquarters to the developing regions subject to the criteria proposed above. Similar consideration should be given to the Nordic countries as well as Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States in the perspective of achieving a more global spread of the organizations headquarters.

54. In their comments on the draft of this report some organizations queried the feasibility of this recommendation on account of the infrastructural costs of relocation and additional representational costs to Member States. The Inspector addresses these valid concerns as follows. Firstly, this report is not a crusade for decentralization for its own sake. As a factual description of various aspects of (de)centralization, the report is designed to spark discussion of these issues in the governing bodies - the ultimate assessors of the merits and demerits of each organization's (re)location. Secondly, it is observed that some Member States in the distant and recent past have relocated their political capitals (headquarters) for various overriding reasons notwithstanding significant attendant costs to themselves and to other Member States who also had to move their embassies as well as to international organizations who had to move their representations.

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55. It is the belief of the Inspector that in view of the significant tangible and intangible benefits of hosting the headquarters of any organization of the system, prospective host cities and countries should at the very least be required to finance the infrastructural costs of relocating the organization and should provide rent-free premises. As for representational costs, it may be observed that the present pattern of headquarters location requires Member States to have delegations in seven different cities in Europe and North America. Deconcentration would not necessarily increase that number of host cities or countries.

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III. THE MANAGERIAL FRAMEWORK

A. Rationale and objectives

56. Decentralization is a sound management principle in its own right. Most national civil services or public utility corporations as well as multinational firms are usually extensively decentralized in staff and operating authority. One way or another decentralization is the vehicle by which services and goods are brought as close as possible to the citizen or customer. That vehicle will serve UN system organizations even better considering the complex diversity and global nature of their "customership". Through decentralization the organizations can have a direct and sustained feel for local cultural values and brittle particularities whose intimate understanding is a necessary condition for the success of their development mission. They can also build an enhanced image for themselves through more intense interaction with their global constituency. It is interesting to note in this regard that some highly decentralized organizations like UNICEF, UNDP and WHO seem to be better known and to enjoy a positive image in the field.

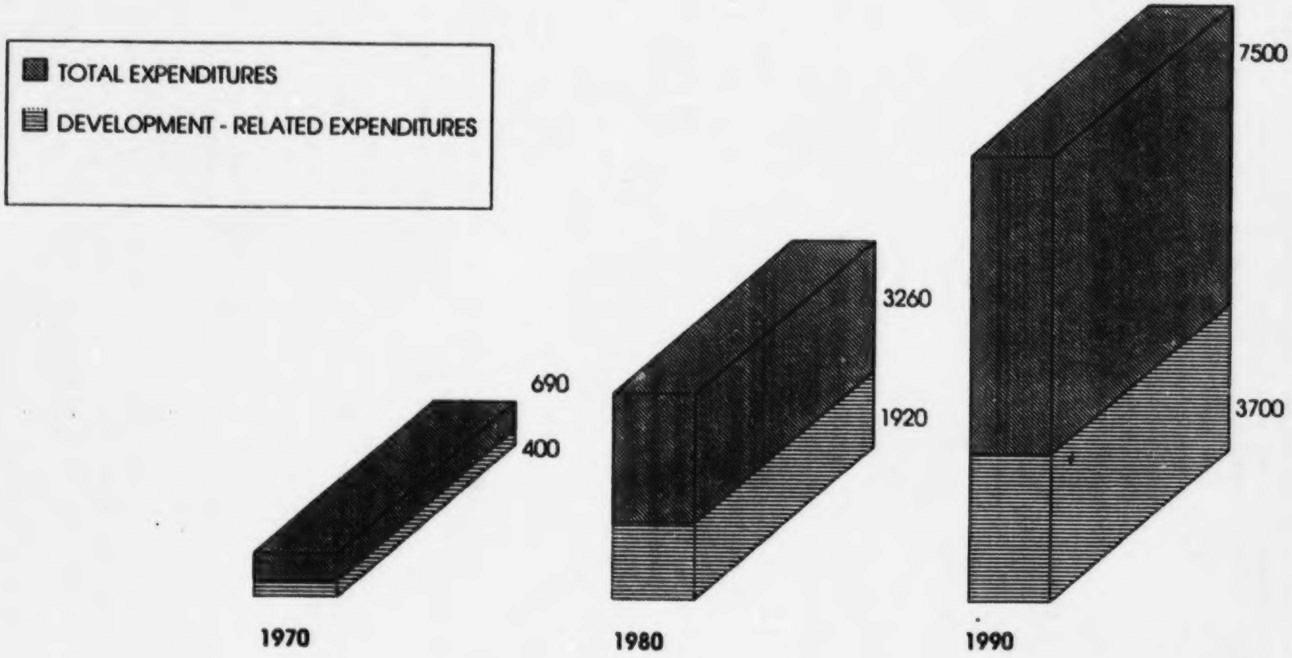
57. Further, the rationale for decentralization is partly to be found in the constitutions of some organizations (UN, WHO, FAO, ILO,) which provide for regional or subregional structures. For the UN system as a whole the impetus to decentralize has come from the governing bodies which have enjoined on their organizations to adapt their programmes, regulations and structures to the evolving needs of their memberships. For example, UN General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 1977 and 44/211 of 1989 provide directives to the entire common system on the subject. More specifically, WHO's Health Assembly resolution 29/48 of 1976, FAO Council resolution 10/89 of 1989, ITU resolutions PLEN/5, PL-A/1, COM61-COM6/18 of 1989, and more recently UNESCO 1992 Executive Board guidelines (132 EX/Decisions) have all sought in various ways to bolster the decentralization processes in these organizations.

58. Decentralization also pursues a practical managerial objective: to ensure efficient application of and proper accountability for the ever increasing resources for operational activities implemented world-wide by the organizations. The grant and catalytic nature of these resources compels a hands-on field involvement by the organizations to ensure that the resources are used to optimal developmental effect. Over the last two decades those resources have expanded from about US$400 million in 1970 to US$1.9 billion in 1980 and to US$3.7 billion in 1990 (see figure 7, page 22). Much to their credit, the organizations as a whole have, during the corresponding period, expanded their field offices from 300 in 1970 to 568 in 1990. However, as discussed further below, these offices, with few exceptions, are staffed mainly by extrabudgetary and local staff with limited delegated authority and knowledge of their organizations' financial and administrative rules.

59. More revealing still, the expansion of field offices has in most cases not implied decentralization of staff or increased delegation of authority from headquarters to the field level. Indeed, while resources for operational activities almost doubled between 1980 and 1990, there was during the same period a centralization process at work in the organizations, the overall ratio of headquarters staff to total staff having edged up by two percentage points according to CCAQ personnel statistics. Between 1985 and 1990 when decentralization was much discussed in the system, that ratio increased by an average of 4 per cent in 8 specialized agencies, remained constant in 3 agencies and dropped in only 2 agencies; in ILO by 5 per cent and in UNESCO by 1 per cent. It could be inferred from this analysis that the organizations' staff management or deployment policies are not congruent with their worldwide resource expenditure patterns, or that a good portion of their resources in the last decade went into financing headquarters expansion instead of field programmes.

60. Decentralization is also about achieving field-level objectives common to the organizations, such as developing unified field programme strategies, harmonizing intervention procedures, co-ordinating inputs, providing advisory and analytical support to governments, etc. In general, the attainment of these objectives is inhibited by:

Figure 7 : TOTAL UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM EXPENDITURES : 1970 - 1990
(IN US MILLION DOLLARS)



Source of data : DP/1991/69; DP/199/74; A/46/206/add.1; and CCAQ statistics on the organizations' expenditures

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(a) uneven degrees of delegated authority to field representatives by different organizations in various aspects: programme/project development, negotiation, approval and revisions, local and external procurement, recruitment and personnel administration, commitment and disbursement of funds, accountability requirements; fund-raising, etc.

(b) differences in the grade structure of the organizations' field representatives as well as in project and programme cycles, fiscal years, administrative procedures, etc.;

(c) frequent and sometimes considerable and costly delays in headquarters decision-making processes with regard to field operations;

(d) different geographical levels of representation.

61. These difficulties can be directly attributed to the lack of a system-wide co-ordinated strategy of decentralization, as implied by UN General Assembly in resolution 44/211 urging organizations of the common system to, among other measures:

(a) decentralize capacity and authority to the country level in order to increase responsiveness to the needs of developing countries;

(b) fully utilize national capacities in all aspects of the programming processes and project cycles of operational activities;

(c) shift from a project approach to a programme approach, and develop programme-oriented mechanisms for the provision of technical co-operation in support of national programmes;

(d) take specific measures to achieve a greater degree of accountability and transparency in the use of funds for operational activities in the light of the reorientation of the UN development system towards in particular government/national execution, decentralization, delegation of authority and adoption of a more programme-oriented approach; etc.

62. These guidelines together with measures taken by other governing bodies of the common system (see paragraph 57 above) provide clear marching orders for a renewed system-wide drive towards decentralization. Part II of this report subtitled "Comparative Approaches" describes how each organization is responding to these orders.

B. Summary of progress and constraints

63. The detailed review in part II of this report of the status of decentralization in each organization of the system is only a digest of the Inspector's findings in the course of his numerous interviews and analyses of documentation on the subject. These findings can be summarized as follows.

64. **Momentum:** Since the JIU's 1986 Report on Field Representation of Organizations of the United Nations System: Structure and Co-ordination (JIU/REP/86/1) and the 1989 UN General Assembly resolution 44/211 on operational activities for development, there has been perceptible movement within the UN system on the issue of decentralization. Some organizations are adjusting faster than others, while some others seem to have a clear strategic road map (e.g. JCGP, ILO, and ITU). Overall, however, the efforts of individual organizations are neither synchronized nor standardized: they are not based on a clear over-arching strategy and goal at the level of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) where all the organizations are represented, and as required by the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the mandate of ACC. CCSQ/OPS has, however, very recently taken the first steps in this direction. But much more remains to be done.

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65. **Technical Co-operation and regular programmes:** With the prominent exception of WHO, there is a partition varying from one agency to another between their technical co-operation work, on the one hand, and regular programmes, on the other. Although some agencies dispute this finding, it seems pretty obvious to the Inspector. True enough, several agencies have endeavoured of late to bring their technical co-operation work under the irrigation of their regular, technical co-operation programmes, without however approaching the integration between the two which is the norm in WHO.

66. Whereas most other agencies finance their technical co-operation services from project support costs income, WHO finances them mainly from its regular budget. While other agencies have separate Departments of technical co-operation which sometimes co-exist uncomfortably with their regular programme structures, WHO has no such separate Department because virtually all its substantive Departments are cross-sectionally permeated by technical co-operation concerns. In other agencies technical co-operation services are organized to support project implementation in the field. WHO's substantive Departments are all geared to support the health programmes of Member States. In other agencies, technical co-operation delivery structures are based essentially at headquarters. In WHO they are based in the field, in the regional offices, where they ideally belong. The principal reason for these vital differences is that technical co-operation is writ large in WHO's Constitution. The original constitutions of most other agencies (UNIDO being another major exception) differ in that technical co-operation does not enjoy the same emphasis as global co-ordination, normative and regulatory functions. For this reason the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) amended its basic text in 1989 to make technical co-operation for development a major constitutional requirement. This reform paved the way for ITU's progressive decentralization process.

67. Other agencies which have not yet undertaken similar constitutional reforms since their creation may not be marching fully abreast of the rapidly expanding development requirements of the vast majority of their members. Where development-related functions are not embedded in an organization's constitution, when those functions are not integrated with regular programme functions, and when there is no purposeful decentralization, any involvement in field-level development activities on the present scale can only logically result in ineffectual and even wasteful application of scarce development resources. This correlation has been validated in a recent JIU study of the technical co-operation operations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). There is therefore a clear need for organizations which have not yet done so to further integrate development co-operation concerns within their regular programme functions, backed where necessary by relevant constitutional amendments as done by ITU in 1989. Additionally, each Organization should establish its desirable target of decentralization to be achieved within a specified time-frame, taking into account the volume of its operational activities for development, and recommendation 6 of this report proposing UN system regional structures.

68. **Regular and extrabudgetary staff:** Decentralization equally comes to grief on the distinction between regular and extra-budgetary staff. This distinction has been one of the major brakes on decentralization. Extrabudgetary staff, consisting mostly of "project staff", are generally recruited for field service and are therefore concentrated in the field. The vast majority of them know little about their employer organizations, and least of all about the UN system. For the most part they lack headquarters experience. They can neither effectively apply the organizations' technical co-operation policies nor their financial regulations and rules. Management accountability suffers. On the other hand, regular programme staff seem to be recruited for and are concentrated in headquarters. They are the organizations' real institutional memory, their best and brightest, their standard bearers. Extrabudgetary staff do not enjoy the same degree of stability of tenure as regular staff and they are the first victims of budgetary crises. This situation would seem to give the technical co-operation staff a lower status in most agencies.

69. **Universality:** The Inspector also found some agencies on the horns of a dilemma in trying to strike "the right balance" between their "universal" calling on the one hand and development mission on the other. The universal calling is considered of utmost importance, usually requiring strategic expertise or "critical mass", that cannot possibly be decentralized from headquarters or

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duplicated at field level without significant cost implications. The "strategic experts" are almost always paid from the regular budgets. Here again the distinction between universality and technical co-operation appears artificially overdrawn. "Universality" and technical co-operation concern all the Member States of the organizations. Technical co-operation ideally should create in the developing countries the political, socio-economic and technological conditions which are fundamental to the relevance and applicability of universal conventions, standards, regulations and rules in the various sectors covered by the organizations. Viewed in this context technical co-operation is deeply interrelated with standard-setting and regulatory activities of the UN system.

70. **The lack of policy co-ordination** within some Member States on the issue of decentralization is yet another problem worthy of note. Some Member states support decentralization in some organizations but take exception to it in others. There is an underlying feeling that some executive heads have demurred on decentralization because of these contradictory signals. For example, the use of the regular budget for technical co-operation is fully accepted in WHO but resisted in ICAO or UNIDO. Member States impose a zero-growth on the regular budget but increasingly provide extrabudgetary funds. They recognize UNDP as the central funding organization, call for a programme approach, the simplification and harmonization of delivery procedures, etc, but at the same time special purpose or sector specific funds continue to proliferate and to complicate the practical application of a programme approach, and the simplification and harmonization of delivery procedures. Member States might wish to come to grips with these inherent contradictions if they wish to give a new fillip to decentralization.

71. **The Resident Co-ordinator** institution came under sharp criticism in some agencies in the course of this study. Its workability and usefulness were considered to be heavily dependent on the personal qualities, managerial experience and international stature of the individual co-ordinators, rather than on the institution per se. The country-level goals of decentralization cannot be fully attained if the Resident Co-ordinator's office does not command the necessary authority or function as efficiently and smoothly as it should to co-ordinate anything. In the judgement of officials in the specialized agencies those conditions are by and large still to be satisfied.

72. **A decentralization culture or ethos** is in most cases lacking in the headquarters of most of the organizations although some improvements are now being introduced. There is no mandatory staff rotation policy in any specialized agency between headquarters and field, except for the recently introduced ILO scheme. Headquarters makes reporting from the field mandatory but never the reverse. Long delays are reported to occur in headquarters decision-making processes without regard for the urgency of field operations; etc.

73. **Delegation of authority and discharge of accountability** are two related aspects of decentralization that would deserve a separate study in view of their importance. The present situation (excluding WHO and JCGP) can be summed up as follows:

> Personnel: Recruitment of international project personnel remains centralized at headquarters. Field offices can recruit local personnel only for a few months and for junior positions.
>
> Procurement: Field representatives can raise purchase orders under a ceiling of US$20,000 (from 10,000 until recently). Procurement remains highly centralized even in cases of local purchase orders as these still must be processed and paid for by headquarters in most cases. Headquarters procurement/supply officers seldom travel to the field to acquaint themselves with local purchasing possibilities.
>
> Subcontracts: Field representatives can invite local tenders under prescribed limits but cannot control resources.
>
> Accountability: This is always discharged by headquarters together with performance control functions such as audit, monitoring and evaluation. As noted above the regular

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programme staff who are conversant with the organizations' administrative and financial rules and managerial processes are generally concentrated at headquarters, notwithstanding the considerable growth in the field activities of the organizations and increased need for accountability.

Project approval is usually done by headquarters, including in most cases approval of project revisions and signing of project documents. In some cases these may be done by field Representatives but only on authorization by headquarters.

Funds: The picture here is not very clear. The extent to which field Representatives can financially commit their organizations and make disbursements is largely dependent on conditions for operating imprest accounts. Fund-raising is generally not undertaken by field Representatives.

74. The overall limited delegation of authority from headquarters to the field was succinctly described in the 1986 JIU report on Field Representation, which stated: "Some agencies are overly cautious or reluctant to give to their officers in the field the responsibility and the authority to take necessary action without reference back to Headquarters. Many administrative procedures exercised by Headquarters run counter to real decentralization and make work in the field less effective and more costly. Too many decisions have to await Headquarters' sanction. The Inspectors learnt that field office purposes were sometimes defeated by lower level controls at Headquarters. Country representatives should be tried and talented Professionals chosen for their capacity to manage affairs, to exercise initiative and judgment: they should have the authority to take the necessary decisions in the field. The Inspectors came across cases where representatives found their Headquarters' approach self-defeating: one representative who needed urgent temporary help to pursue the approved business of his agency could not take a decision for this purpose without approval from his Headquarters, the approval did arrive but so late as to have adversely prejudiced the work intended. Administrative procedures ought to support rather than obstruct field offices aims. The need is for the Headquarters' role, functions and procedures vis-à-vis the field to be clearly delineated and so shaped as to serve the aim of rapid decision-making in the field".

75. This situation may again be due to the absence of a decentralization ethos, not only in headquarters' relations with the field, but equally so within headquarters where decision-making appears highly centralized, and between the latter and the governing bodies, which increasingly tend to micro-manage programmes already approved. In addition to the directives of the governing bodies, individual major donors set rules of accountability so high that headquarters adopt excessively prudent and therefore centralized management approaches. The increasing trend by some donors to impose their own priorities, preferences and wishes on the organizations, including differing formats of accountability requirements, limits the flexibility and the authority of the executive heads to enforce regular programme priorities approved by the governing bodies and checks delegation of authority to the field. The Inspector therefore sees the need for more management trust between the policy organs and executive heads, so that organizations' internal performance control and management review services may be further strengthened and utilized to their full capacity as much for the regular budget as for all other sources of funding.

76. **Professional staff composition:** The tendency to fill decentralized units mostly with internationally-recruited professional staff originating from within the host region appears to the Inspector to defeat the ultimate goal of decentralization. The UN system can be viewed as a unique, global multilateral network for pooling and sharing innovative ideas, technology and experiences. In this light decentralization of the organizations enables all parts of the world to share in that global pool of knowledge and experience. This can be achieved more effectively only if the staff composition of decentralized establishments fully reflects the international, multiracial and multicultural character emblematic of the UN system. This hallmark makes the substantive difference between the decentralized structures of the system and exclusively regional and national institutions.

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77. The indispensable need for UN system programmes to cater to distinct local socio-cultural factors is addressed, on the one hand, by regional and national institutions in their interaction with the UN system and, on the other hand, by local professional officers increasingly used in the decentralized structures of the organizations. Internationally-recruited staff are expected by definition to bring internationally value-added experience to bear on the solution of development problems and to gain in the process new experience that they can use in subsequent assignments. It is thus particularly regrettable to note the very limited number of nationals from the developing countries serving in the decentralized European Offices of the UN system, and vice-versa. Decentralization should not be used to caution racial exclusion which violates the spirit, if not the letter, of UN system constitutions.

78. The Inspector therefore recommends that appropriate measures be introduced to restore where necessary the world-wide international character of all decentralized units with special reference to all UN regional economic commissions, WHO regional offices (excepting PAHO) and field establishments of JCGP organizations. The executive head of each organization should establish the principle that not more than 40 per cent of internationally-recruited professional staff in decentralized offices (excluding national professional officers, associate experts and junior professional officers) should originate from any one region.

79. **Communications:** One positive trend noted in the course of this study concerns the general modernization of communications and management information systems, which are an important feature of any system of decentralization. Several individual organizations, especially the JCGP group, have significantly strengthened their telecommunication linkages with the field offices. But for the common system as a whole, more efforts are required to achieve an integrated global telecommunication network that would considerably reduce costs, ease communications between headquarters and field offices and among the latter, and facilitate decentralization and management control processes. Such a network can now be considered entirely feasible following the adoption in 1989 by ITU Plenipotentiary Conference of resolution 50 authorizing the United Nations to act as a common carrier for the communications of the specialized agencies as well as the organizations already served by the United Nations network. An ITU consultant's study of the cost-benefits of a network shared by the UN system suggests savings upwards of US$40 million annually, compared with the US$100 million the common system now spends each year on telecommunications activities. All the organizations should therefore take advantage of the UN global network, and co-operative efforts in this direction should be intensified by ACC's Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) as an integral component of a co-ordinated approach to decentralization.

80. **Role of ACC:** In view of the central role that ACC can and should ideally play in evolving a more disciplined and concerted approach to decentralization, in accordance with the spirit of General Assembly Resolution 44/211 and ACC's co-ordination mandate, the Inspector recommends that ACC should undertake a comprehensive study of certain elements of decentralization to explore the possibilities of a more uniform level of delegation of authority to the field, uniform profile and grade of field Representatives and closer co-operation in communications systems not only between headquarters and field but also at field level. The very recent position adopted by CCSQ/OPS on this subject should be considered as only very preliminary and tentative. A great deal more needs to be done in the light of the findings and conclusions of this report.

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IV. TOWARDS A REGIONAL SYSTEM OF DECENTRALIZATION

81. A common UN system approach to decentralization would have to resolve the present ambiguity regarding the relative importance to be assigned to country or regional representation from the vantage point of cost efficiency and effectiveness. Some organizations are currently represented only at the country level, others only at the regional or subregional level, others still at both levels, while others either have no country representation or depend on UNDP resident representatives. In addition, the organizations represented at the regional or subregional level do not delegate the same authority or have similar territorial jurisdictions. Furthermore, some organizations represented at both levels either give a prominent lead role to country representation (FAO and UNIDO) or regional/subregional representation (WHO and UNESCO). Only UNICEF would seem to award equal importance to both regional and country representation. Important factors such as territorial and demographic size, level of development, governmental capabilities to handle modern techniques and the existence of adequate infrastructure define the relationships between the organizations and host countries and also determine the location, size and structure of their representation. Countries like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil or Nigeria may qualify better for subregional structures of representation, subject of course to the wishes of the governments concerned.

82. The present overall pattern of representation shows the JCGP organizations heavily represented at the country level. This approach would seem to accord with their essentially operational mandates and nature of activities. Among the specialized agencies only WHO and FAO have a dense network of country representation in addition to their regional structures. In both cases, however, each country office rarely has more than two or three professional staff, which begs a cost-benefit question. Other specialized agencies appear more inclined towards a regional or subregional approach to decentralization, no doubt for reasons of cost-effectiveness (e.g. ICAO, ILO, ITU, UNESCO, WMO). A few agencies with no field offices have regional advisory services (IAEA, IMO, UPU). WIPO is the only agency still to initiate some form of decentralization towards the field.

83. While the organizations' basic texts in no instance provide for country representation, they explicitly or implicitly call for regional structures of co-operation in the majority of cases. The governments of Member States are, in point of fact, the organizations' "representatives" and action arms within their respective territories. UNESCO's Constitution makes this requirement more explicit with its concept of "national commissions". The regional focus of decentralization seems moreover to be consistent with the emerging importance of regions in international political and economic relations, as exemplified by the proliferation in the last decade of regional and subregional organizations and associations of an intergovernmental or professional character, in all parts of the world. The policy organs of the organizations operate on the basis of regional groups which have become established institutions in their own right.

84. Furthermore, world-wide environmental protection and socio-economic development efforts are exhibiting increasing regional disparities and specific characteristics calling for regionally-tailored approaches, which may require the introduction of new provisions in the constitutions or the strengthening where necessary of existing constitutional provisions on decentralization. For example, Western Europe and North America might wish to give special priority to the protection of their ecosystem and expanding ageing segment of their population; Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States to the management of economic transformations and development investment flows; South America to redressing income disparities, curbing drug traffic and enhancing debt management capabilities; Africa to reduction of illiteracy and poverty rates, building stability through political institutions and strengthening national executing capabilities through mass vocational training programmes; Asia to the acquisition and management of advanced technologies to sharpen its competitiveness, and curbing population growth; etc.

85. Being universal, the organizations will no doubt continue to adopt plans of action based on global strategies. However, to be effective in their applications and results, global schemes must be

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adapted to the specific cultural, social and economic setting of each region and eventually to each subregion and country. This perception is also underscored in a recent report[6] by the UN Secretary-General in the area of peace and security: "Under the Charter, the Security Council has and will continue to have primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, but regional actions as a matter of decentralization, delegation and co-operation with United Nations efforts could not only lighten the burden of the Council but also contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs".

86. The JIU has issued a number of reports in the past recommending the strengthening of the operational effectiveness of the organizations' regional structures. A notable example is the 1975 report on Regional Structures of the UN system (JIU/REP/75/2) which, among other measures, urged the system to:

(i) achieve a common definition of regions and subregions and identical location of regional and subregional offices;

(ii) decentralize adequate authority and responsibility to their regional offices accompanied by appropriate redeployment of professional staff and resources;

(iii) Reinforce technical and co-operative links between the regional structures of the system and regional inter-governmental organizations outside the UN system;

(iv) involve the regional economic commissions and other regional offices in country programming exercises;

(v) improve communications and working relations between the regional economic commissions and other regional offices of the system; etc.

87. General Assembly resolution 32/197 (in chapter IV of its annex on regional and interregional co-operation) articulates basically the same directives. Another JIU report in 1985 on Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations (JIU/REP/85/9) called for the creation of "regional development agencies" with an interdisciplinary focus and responsible at once, for health, agriculture, industry, education, etc. The report argued that the sectoral approach is altogether inappropriate for development problems which call for an integrated approach and organic co-operation by all the parties concerned, and that any action in respect of development at world level means ignoring regional and national peculiarities and makes for a superficial view of the problem. The report concluded that "the solution can only be regional or subregional and integrated, which means that all those having to do with development should be sent into the field".

88. The international political, economic and social setting is currently marked by profound changes which by themselves are a dramatic call for a thorough reform of the operational structures and approaches of the UN system. Drought, famine and the global AIDS disease are ravaging entire regions. Vast new demands in Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States must legitimately be addressed by the international community. So also must the upshot of civil wars in many parts of the world, accompanied by floods of refugees and displaced persons. The rapid expansion of UN peace-keeping and related operations, estimated to cost close to US$3 billion in 1992, has opened yet another front in the international struggle against human deprivation and misery. Since there can be no development in the context of famine, pandemics, civil wars and uprooted populations, the challenge facing the UN system today is a single hydra-headed phenomenon that cannot be overcome through traditional, sector-segmented approaches or existing organizational framework for operational activities. The organizations must face this challenge in disciplined, interlocking ranks.

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[6] Agenda for Peace (A/47/277 of 17 June 1992)

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89. The moral will of the UN system to develop an integrated response and to concentrate its diverse strength like a laser beam on present global priorities is sorely tested at a time when practically all Member States of the organizations are working actively towards economic integration for mutual benefit. Large corporations with several times the human and financial resources of the UN system are merging or integrating to achieve greater competitiveness and economies of scale. If Member States are willing to yield some elements of their sovereignty for the general good, and private firms to lose their corporate identity for larger profit, why would the organizations of the system be unable to overcome the burden of "sectoral competence" and constitutional isolationism in the overriding interest of human welfare?

90. The Inspector firmly believes that the time is now opportune for Member States to adopt within appropriate organs courageous reform measures in respect of the operational structures of the UN system. In order to assist the governing bodies in their review of those structures, the Inspector recommends the following. The UN Economic and Social Council in the context of its revitalized mandate and acting under Articles 55, 62 and 63 of the UN Charter, should initiate studies and consultations with the appropriate governing bodies of the UN development system so as to determine the feasibility of establishing UN system integrated and multidisciplinary regional development structures or mechanisms akin to the Regional Development Banks.

91. The proposed mechanisms which would enable the UN development system to give solid shape to inter-agency co-operation and to relate more effectively to regional, subregional and country specifics, could for example have the following elements:

(a) They could include the present field-based regional structures of the system as well as the divisions, units and services in the organizations' headquarters concerned with field operations. These divisions, units and services might therefore be decentralized fully to the regions.

(b) The terms of reference and programmes of all the regional economic commissions could be reviewed and if necessary recast to permit the full integration of the commissions with the new regional arrangements, which could simply be called UN system regional commissions with redefined mandates and programme thrusts.

(c) The executive heads of the new structures could be appointed by ACC exclusively on the basis of their credentials and stature. The composition of the professional staff of each regional structure would scrupulously reflect the world-wide international and multiracial character of the UN system and not more than 40 per cent of such staff should originate from one region. Pending the establishment of the new mechanisms, the professional staff composition of existing regional offices and economic commissions should be altered accordingly.

(d) The global policy organ of the proposed regional structures would be the UN Economic and Social Council, while the regional policy organs might be constituted at the level of heads of state or their representatives. Existing regional inter-governmental organizations could serve this purpose (e.g. Organization of American States, Arab League, Organization of African Unity, European Economic Community, Association of South East Asian Nations, etc.)

(e) The new regional structures would have distinct budgets shared proportionally by organizations of the system, on the model of ACC bodies.

(f) The regional structures would be responsible or not for establishing and overseeing unified subregional and country offices which would be set up, structured, reinforced, or pared down on the basis of a selective strategy focused on needs and problems as well as on considerations of cost-efficiency and effectiveness rather than on the present fragmented approaches to country representation by individual organizations.

(g) The development-related role of headquarters would be confined to interregional and global themes and issues, including policy research and analysis, fund-raising and conceptual co-ordination at the global level.

(h) In setting up the proposed structures a flexible approach could be adopted to reflect the magnitude and nature of the development challenge specific to each region. For example, the feasibility of the structures could be tested in the first instance in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States as well as in Africa, two regions where the organizations' integrated actions would appear desperately necessary.

92. **The rationale** for the proposed new structures can be further argued as follows:

(a) To cope effectively with the new global realities and priorities, including Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), the Economic and Social Council has undertaken unprecedented reforms of its structure and subsidiary bodies in order to revitalize its global policy co-ordination role for the entire United Nations system. The full realization of the goal of this intergovernmental reform process may not be a foregone conclusion without corresponding significant reform and revitalization of the organizations' implementing structures in the economic, social and related fields. As proposed above, the new structures, based within the regions, should considerably facilitate the rapid, efficient and integrated application by ACC members at the field level of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council directives, which is hardly possible under the present fragmented and duplicative programmes and approaches of the organizations, each responsible and reporting to its governing body.

(b) While the regional commissions vary in their capacity for inter-agency co-ordination within their respective regions, as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 32/197, it is obvious that the vast problems facing Africa and Eastern European countries and Commonwealth of Independent States could not possibly be left solely to the genius of the Economic Commissions for Africa and Europe. A broader and higher-level system-wide coalition would appear indispensable, in the form of the proposed new regional mechanisms.

(c) The development of UN system integrated country programmes and representations which is now gaining acceptance and momentum, would seem to justify a similar approach at the regional level, where all agencies, however small, can financially afford field representation within an integrated structure.

(d) The new modalities of technical co-operation contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211, and in particular the shift to a programme approach, national execution and capacity building, cannot properly be supported by remote control from the organizations' headquarters as at present. As exemplified by WHO's decentralized model, these modalities require closer proximity to the countries in order to provide technical support on a continuing basis. Unlike projects, programmes have an indefinite life-span.

(e) The UN Conference on Environment and Development, as well as recent reports by the UN Secretary-General (Agenda for Peace, Work of the Organization, restructuring process) emphasize more than ever before the need for an integrated approach to development issues, encompassing environmental, political, economic, social, demographic and cultural aspects. The proposed new mechanisms should readily guarantee the practical application of such an approach.

93. **The feasibility** of the new arrangements can be argued as follows.

(a) Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/40 in which the Council reaffirmed the importance it attached to an integrated United Nations system approach to, and presence in, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Secretary-General

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already has established a nucleus of integrated UN system offices in six countries of the region. Though limited for now to the country level, these offices suggest the feasibility of a similar approach at the regional level.

(b) The JCGP organizations and the entities concerned almost wholly with operational activities for development and emergency relief operations would continue to concentrate their actions at the country level, serving as a trip-wire force for the rest of the system. The regional commissions, appropriately integrated with other substantive UN entities and technical agencies of the system, would form the technological tooling structures designed to translate global policies and strategies into more specific regional blueprints and programmes for implementation by national governments, assisted by the country-level operational force of the system.

(c) The regional commissions already have joint divisions or units with other organizations of the system. This underscores the feasibility of expanding such arrangements to include more or all technical agencies of the system, including the Regional Bureaux of UNDP, depending on the development requirements of each region.

(d) The establishment of the proposed structures would not imply additional costs - on the contrary - if implemented as advocated by the Inspector, for example by pooling the existing regional resources, or most of these resources, and by decentralizing headquarters-based technical co-operation services, which are already conveniently organized on a regional basis.

(e) The ultimate shift to national execution and to a new regime of support costs may no longer justify the continuation of sizeable and expensive technical co-operation support services at headquarters. The limited resources that may ultimately be available to each agency could be used more economically and no doubt to greater effect within integrated UN system structures at the regional level.

(f) The organizations would not necessarily lose their constitutional identity while participating in the integrated structures, and special arrangements could be envisaged between the new structures and the regional organizations of WHO because of their unique character.

94. **The benefits** to be expected from the proposed mechanisms include, for example:

(a) Significant savings in infrastructural and staff costs.

(b) Management and financial accountability for all the organizations' field operations would be more easily and effectively performed, with built-in management and financial control systems.

(c) The organizations would be able to co-operate more creatively, as a unified field force, with the multilateral financial institutions, as stressed in a recent JIU report: "United Nations system co-operation with multilateral financial institutions" (JIU/REP/92/1).

(d) The effective integration of the analytical, technological and operational capabilities of the organizations at the regional level would considerably strengthen their comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners and could even guarantee increased donor funding of their field programmes.

(e) The new structures would serve as coherent field transmission belts between the UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, on the one hand, and national governments as well as unified UN system country representation, on the other.

(f) Supporting countries from a regional level would seem to make sense in circumstances where

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national co-ordinating and administrative capabilities are weak, or where governmental institutions are overwhelmed by social strife or civil wars, since regional and subregional programmes place fewer demands on national services, and are less affected by government changes and socio-economic instability.

95. **Some basic preconditions** for success include, for example:

(a) The full participation of all the specialized agencies in the design, staffing and management of the proposed mechanisms in which the Bretton Woods institutions could also be invited to participate.

(b) Scrupulous attention would need to be given to selecting and organizing the executive management of the proposed mechanisms, which could include an ACC - appointed Executive Board similar to the Boards of Directors of the multilateral financial institutions.

(c) The mechanisms should not be regional organizational behemoths; they should in turn address differences within their respective regions by spreading out into subregional task forces similar to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCS) of the Economic Commission for Africa, but much more technically equipped than the latter in their combination of analytical, technological and operational capabilities.

(d) Development of new staff profiles and programme strategies designed to tackle head-on the most serious development problems facing each region, such as frameworks for economic transformations in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States or poverty and illiteracy eradication in Africa and Asia.

(e) At a time of diminishing development aid world-wide and much of it flowing into emergency relief programmes, it is obvious that a central priority for some of the proposed mechanisms should be economic integration as well as local generation and proper management of resources within their respective regions. This would require intensified emphasis on the strengthening and networking of regional and subregional institutions in various sectors, as well as on private sector support and investment promotion strategies, policies and laws, coupled with building of national managerial and technological capacities across the board.

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V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

96. Although the subject of decentralization has been much discussed within the UN system for many years, only in the last couple of years has it begun to find practical expression in some organizations. The profound changes that have supervened in the memberships of the organizations and in the international political, economic and social fabric since the UN system came into being, and more dramatically in recent past with the end of the cold war, have justifiably heightened pressure for a thorough-going reform of the operational structures of the UN system to enable it to interact more creatively with the different regions, peoples and cultures which constitute the organizations' universal constituency.

97. In this broad canvas of reforms the entry point for any serious discussion of decentralization should be a review of the present location of the headquarters of the organizations and the eventual progressive relocation of some of them in order to achieve a more global pattern of headquarters' location. Additionally, the periodic sessions of the governing bodies of the system should be used more effectively to promote the practical goal of decentralization if they are held away from headquarters on a rotating regional basis.

98. The resolutions of the UN General Assembly and of other governing bodies of the system on the subject of decentralization constitute an authoritative source of policy guidance for the restructuring efforts that are inevitable for the UN system. But overall progress has been chequered, and no clear overarching strategy of decentralization has been developed as yet at the level of ACC, save for the very recent initial steps in this direction by CCSQ/OPS.

99. The Inspector concludes that such a co-ordinated and strategic approach involving all the organizations of the UN system is indispensable and urgently needed in view of the rapidly evolving nature and scope of operational activities for development and the new modalities of technical co-operation mandated by the UN General Assembly resolution 44/211. Moreover, the scourge of famine, drought, AIDS, uprooted populations, civil wars and deepening social misery in many parts of the world calls for significant strengthening of the field presence and operational capabilities and responsiveness of the organizations working as an integrated field force.

100. This implies that the decentralization process of the UN system should go far beyond half measures or the mere tinkering with existing structures and procedures. It should focus squarely on the feasibility of establishing UN system integrated, multidisciplinary regional development mechanisms similar to the structures of Regional Development Banks, and responsible for the organizations' operational activities for development.

101. As part of the preparatory measures for the establishment of new regional arrangements, more specific moves would be called for in order to harmonize several elements of decentralization and particularly the levels of authority delegated to the field, operating relationships between country and regional representation, grade structure of representation, communications and information management systems.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Strengthening of regional and interregional co-operation

In Pursuing his current efforts at reform of the United Nations secretariat in the economic, social and related sectors, the Secretary-General should consider the need to ensure full

implementation of all the provisions of chapter IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, taking into account:

(a) the proposals made in chapter I of Part II of this report with respect to the need for functional integration between the regional commissions and global secretariat entities in the economic, social and related sectors;

(b) paragraphs 90-95 above and recommendation 6 below concerning the feasibility of establishing UN system integrated and multidisciplinary regional development structures.

Recommendation 2: Co-ordinated approach to decentralization

(a) The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) should develop a harmonized framework of decentralization, including degrees of authority decentralized to the field by all the organizations, the complementarities of roles at headquarters, regional and country levels, the grade structures of representation, communications and information management systems. The proposed framework should fully reflect the increasingly intersectoral nature of operational activities for development, the new modalities of technical co-operation, the marked disparities among regional, subregional and country situations and work already done on the subject by JCGP organizations, and measures proposed in recommendation 6 of this report.

(b) All the specialized agencies should take advantage of the United Nations telecommunication network pursuant to resolution 50 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference of 1989.

Recommendation 3: Mandatory target of decentralization

The governing bodies should establish decentralization targets to be achieved by their respective organizations within a specified time-frame. Because of the differing constitutions and circumstances of the organizations, the Inspector recommends no hard and fast target but believes that the target should reflect the volume of each organization's technical co-operation activities, and measures proposed in recommendation 6 of this report.

Recommendation 4: Integration of development co-operation with regular programmes

Organizations which have not yet done so should further integrate development co-operation concerns within their regular programme functions, backed by constitutional amendments if necessary, as done by ITU in 1989.

Recommendation 5: Professional staff composition of decentralized units

Measures should be introduced to restore fully the international character of the professional staffing tables of decentralized units in each region (excluding national professional officers, associate experts and junior professional officers), so that not more than 40 per cent of internationally-recruited staff should originate from any one region. This recommendation applies in particular to UN regional economic commissions, member organizations of JCGP, WHO (excluding PAHO), FAO, UNESCO and ILO. Appropriate accompanying measures may be necessary such as intensive language training to satisfy the linguistic conditions for service in some regions.

Recommendation 6: Towards a regional system of decentralization

The UN Economic and Social Council, in the context of its revitalized mandate and new global developments, and in accordance with Articles 55, 62 and 63 of the UN Charter,

should initiate studies and consultations with all appropriate governing bodies so as to determine the feasibility of establishing UN system integrated and multidisciplinary regional development mechanisms or of transforming the regional commissions into UN system regional commissions along the tentative lines suggested in this report.

Recommendation 7: Decentralization of the venues of governing body sessions

Following the practice established by the governing bodies of UNCTAD, IAEA, ITU, UPU, and UNESCO, the Economic and Social Council, UNDP Governing Council, UNICEF Executive Board, and General Conferences of other organizations may wish to review the possibility of meeting periodically away from their organizations' headquarters on a rotating regional basis. To this end, the Secretariats should develop a set of incentives designed to motivate Member States to host legislative sessions within their territories, in the context of UN General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 1985.

Recommendation 8: Progressive decentralization of the organizations' headquarters

(a) The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination should develop a minimum set of criteria (e.g. adequacy and efficiency of logistic and communications infrastructure, racial tolerance and harmony, security and safety conditions, cost and standard of living, readiness and ability of host cities or governments to provide rent-free premises and or contribute substantially towards removal and installation costs, etc) to be fulfilled by Member States currently hosting or wishing to host the headquarters or some divisions of any organization, to ensure that present and future headquarters agreements are uniform and fully serve the needs of all Member States, the organizations and their staff;

(b) The seats of the organizations should therefore not be considered permanent, constitutionally or otherwise, and discussion of the relocation of some of them could be placed on the agendas of the governing bodies following competitive bidding procedures based on ACC criteria and other considerations set forth in this report, mutatis mutandis, with the ultimate goal of achieving a more global pattern of headquarters location, for the benefit of the organizations and of the international community;

(c) The governing bodies of organizations wholly concerned with development-related issues could consider the possibility of gradually moving the seats of these organizations or some of their services to the developing regions, subject to (a) and (b) above. Similar consideration should be given in the context of this recommendation to the Nordic countries as well as Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States.

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JIU/REP/92/6 (Part II)

DECENTRALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

PART II.: COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

Prepared by
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Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
1992

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COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

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Annexes

1. Recommendations of the regional commissions on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/235 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.
2. Measures adopted on decentralization by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 136th session in May 1991.
3. ILO Circular on Mobility of staff between field and headquarters assignments.

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NOTE

Part I of this report subtitled "Deconcentration and Managerial processes" embodies the main analysis of physical and functional decentralization issues in respect of the United Nations system. Part I also includes the general introduction as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the Inspector. The present part II of the report subtitled "Comparative Approaches" briefly describes the decentralization policies, approaches and experiences of individual organizations of the system. The Inspector's synthesis of these experiences is presented in Chapter III of Part I of the report. The present volume (Part II) can therefore be considered as an addendum to Part I, which is the main body of the report.

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I. UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

1. Following the United Nations General Assembly resolution 41/213 which launched the process of reform and renewal of the United Nations, a clear momentum is now underway to restructure and revitalize the United Nations intergovernmental machinery and secretariat structures in the economic, social and related fields. All Member States attach great importance to this restructuring and revitalization process, as evidenced by statements and position papers in recent successive sessions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and notably in the "Ad Hoc Working Group on Enhancing International Co-operation for Development: the Role of the United Nations system."

2. The first phase of UN Secretariat reforms introduced early 1992 led to the establishment at UN headquarters of several major Departments integrating formerly disparate organizational entities. In his 1992 report (A/471/1) on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General, announcing the second phase of the restructuring process, expresses "his firm belief that the focus of the United Nations must remain in the field where economic, social and political decisions take effect". He also indicates his intention to extend the reform process to other parts of the United Nations to achieve an "Organization-wide distribution of responsibilities and balance between functions performed at headquarters and those carried out by the regional commissions and other United Nations organs and programmes".

3. The above paragraph suggests that the provisions concerning the regional commissions contained in Chapter IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 and reiterated more recently by Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235, are finally being implemented by the Secretary-General who fully recognizes that the focus of UN activities should be in the field.

4. Indeed, as noted earlier by the regional commissions in 1987,[1] while phase one of the restructuring process initiated under resolution 32/197 was accomplished in a matter of months, "remarkably little agreement has been reached in the course of ten years for the decentralization of responsibilities and resources to the regions. Despite the unequivocal affirmation of Member Governments in a series of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council beginning in 1960 and culminating in the restructuring resolution of 1977 (32/197), decentralization has not become a policy of the Secretariat. Consultations which have taken place between headquarters and the regional commissions have not resulted in a systematic identification of activities and resources which could be decentralized, nor in any meaningful delegation of greater flexibility and accountability to the regional commissions".

5. These concerns have been fully documented and shared by the Joint Inspection Unit in a series of reports on the regional commissions since 1969, and have more recently been amplified in the recommendations by the regional commissions' governing bodies to the forty-seventh

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[1] Note by the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions on their meeting in Bangkok, 12-13 February 1987.

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session of the General Assembly[2] (see annex 1).

6. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) have pointed out some substantive shortcomings in the first phase of the ongoing reform process, including notably: a mechanical approach to restructuring consisting essentially of an amalgamation of units without a corresponding restructuring of programmes; lack of a clear relationship between reform and programme delivery requirements; piece-meal approach reflecting continuity rather than innovation; inadequate rational redeployment of human and budgetary resources to reflect the evolving priorities of the organization, etc. A number of Delegations in the Fifth Committee of the Forty-Seventh Session of the General Assembly have made similar remarks.

7. If the second phase of the reform process is to fulfil the Secretary-General's vision and advocacy of a more integrated approach to development issues as stated in several of his reports, it must perforce redress those shortcomings noted in the first phase by Member States. To that end a holistic review must be initiated of the nature, scope and continuing relevance of the functions and activities performed by the regional commissions, the Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD) and UNCTAD in particular. The list is of course not exhaustive, but because of the similar and no doubt duplicative nature of many of their endeavours, these Secretariat entities must provide the Secretary-General with greatest opportunity to translate into programmatic and functional reality his vision of a more integrated approach to development by the Secretariat, operating coherently with an esprit de corps and focusing squarely on the field level.

8. In this perspective some unique assets of the regional commissions should again be highlighted:

(a) They represent the organic and vital interface between global programmes and strategies on the one hand and field realities on the other. As argued in Part I, Chapter IV of this report, the application of global strategies can be effective only to the extent that they are adapted to the specific and concrete realities of each region through substantive analysis cross-fertilizing with technical co-operation on the ground. The regional commissions are better positioned to deepen and even expand that vital function because of their physical proximity to and intimate knowledge of the countries of their respective regions, in addition to their network of regional and sub-regional institutions supporting regional economic co-operation and integration efforts, today more important than ever before, especially in the developing countries.

(b) The regional commissions between them have a spectrum of specializations within a multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral framework probably broader (though not

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[2] Recommendations of the regional commissions on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/235 (Annex to the report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/47/534).

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necessarily deeper) than those of DESD and UNCTAD. This implies that the regional commissions, if well equipped (which is not yet the case for all of them), can provide through osmotic processes most of the field inputs needed by the global entities for their analytical functions as well by the governing bodies for their policy-making processes. By extension therefore all the UN policy organs in the economic and social fields would be "serviced" substantively as much by the global entities as by the regional commissions in the context of a more functional integration of Secretariat entities in the economic, social and related fields. That requirement is explicit in paragraph 21, Chapter IV of the annex to resolution 32/197 which inter alia stipulates that the "regional commissions should provide inputs for the global policy-making processes of the competent United Nations organs and should participate fully in the implementation of the relevant policy and programme decisions taken by these organs".

(c) One of the major reasons advanced by the global entities against decentralization towards the field is their professed requirement to "service" and relate to their respective governing bodies at headquarters. Despite the fact that they can obtain information from the field offices, these entities generally tend to source their analytical raw material more from the permanent missions at headquarters than from the regional commissions which have such material "camera ready" and in an integrated, multidisciplinary regional context. The data collection and processing function of the UN system which has been stressed by several delegations and by the Nordic countries[3] can be performed better and more rapidly by the regional commissions through first-hand empirical processes on a regional basis than by global UN entities and agencies. This comparative advantage of the commissions therefore needs to be strengthened and refined, not duplicated by the global entities which should better concentrate on global methodologies, analyses and syntheses.

(d) The regional commissions have established, with varying degrees of success and intensity, co-operative relationships through joint units with other UN entities (UNEP, HABITAT, or Centre on Transitional Corporations (CTC) and with some specialized agencies, (FAO and UNIDO). The global UN entities do not enjoy similar practical, field-focused collaborative mechanisms with the rest of the system. If the commissions could develop more joint divisions or units with other appropriate UN specialized agencies they would:

(i) become "the main general economic and social development centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions" (32/197/), and "exercise team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination and co-operation at the regional level" (idem);

(ii) their analytical, programmatic and operational capabilities as well as their multisectoral, interdisciplinary lens would be significantly reinforced;

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[3] See the final report of the Nordic United Nations project and reform proposals by the Nordic countries in document A/C.2/46/17.

(iii) their comparative advantage vis-à-vis UN global entities and the multilateral development banks would equally be enhanced in no small measure;

(iv) they would, more important still, largely fulfil one of the main recommendations of this report concerning the feasibility of pooling the regional structures and resources of the UN system, including headquarters-based technical assistance delivery units, to form UN system integrated and multidisciplinary regional development structures akin to the Regional Development Banks. In that event the commissions could simply be renamed UN system regional commissions - a more integrated and technological regional equivalent of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The benefits to be derived from such an institutional evolution are enumerated in Chapter IV of Part I of this report.

9. The five regional commissions, as of now, vary markedly in some respects in their analytical, co-ordination and project executing capabilities as well as in operational efficiency. As noted in the past by the Joint Inspection Unit in its reports on the regional commissions, they must earn the responsibilities and roles envisaged for them in Chapter IV of the annex to resolution 32/197. Indeed, for the commissions to evolve into veritable centres of gravity for UN system co-operation at the regional level, they must build a reputation for high quality analysis, strategy and programme formulation as well as operational effectiveness. They would also need to modernize staff profiles and cluster their present wide range of programmes around burning priorities in their respective regions. In virtually all cases, but particularly so for the regional commissions for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, a clear shift would be necessary towards regional strategies for private sector development, with emphasis on indigenous resource creation, investment promotion and development, economic integration processes, illiteracy and poverty eradication; etc.

10. Therefore, to attain the objective of decentralization as advocated in this report, a comprehensive review would be necessary of the programme structures and operations of the regional commissions individually and in relation to the global entities, with a view to sharpening where necessary their programme thrusts and operational efficiency, on the one hand, and instituting functional integration at all levels of the Secretariat, on the other hand, in the economic, social and related fields. The comparative advantages identified in paragraph 8 above suggest that the bulk of the inputs needed for the analytical, conceptual work of global entities and by the governing bodies at headquarters would originate from the field structures, thereby ensuring that documentation submitted to the policy organs is more credible and objective because fully informed of field realities and perspectives.

11. It follows from the above that the role of headquarters programmes and related entities should be limited to highly conceptual, comparative and synthetic work, and that project executing functions now associated with DESD (from former DTCD) should be decentralized fully to the regions. Where functions and units cannot be decentralized to the field without incurring additional costs, they should be deconcentrated from headquarters to one of the regions and performed interregionally, thus reinforcing co-operation among the regions and countries. While

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the Centres on Transnational Corporations and Science and Technology for Development could for valid reasons remain located at headquarters, the same may not be true for all other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Development. Some of these could be based in the developing regions while continuing to serve all the countries and at less cost to Member States.

12. Additionally, the Departments of Political and Humanitarian Affairs and Centre on Human Rights could also maintain a minimum of early-warning intelligence services within the Regional commissions as they may ultimately be reorganized in the context of the recommendations addressed by this report to the Economic and Social Council.

II. JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON POLICY (JCGP)

13. This group comprises UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA and IFAD, essentially funding organizations currently accounting for 76 per cent of the system's expenditures on operational activities for development. JCGP, which as a group is highly decentralized in world-wide staff deployment and field office networks as well as in delegated authority to the field, has clearly taken the lead in implementing UN General Assembly resolution 44/211. It has working groups on specific subjects, such as simplification and harmonization of procedures and programme cycles or the sharing of common premises and services in the field.

14. JCGP members recognize that the new modalities of technical co-operation, such as government/national execution, building of national capacities and shift to a programme approach require increased field capacity and harmonized delivery mechanisms.

15. The United Nations Development Programme which is the central funding mechanism for the UN system's operational activities for development as well as the centrepiece of the system's country-level representation, is probably one of the organizations directly seized with the issue of decentralization. In addressing the thirty-ninth session of the UNDP Governing Council in May 1992, the Administrator called for "maximum possible decentralization to the unified (UN system) field office from the headquarters of each of the organizations"; and stressed that true programme co-ordination was only possible at the field level.

16. In addition, UNDP has conducted an extensive management review[4] of its head-quarters and field operations so as to enhance its responsiveness under the new modalities of technical co-operation. An internal strategy paper on decentralization states that "it is difficult to conceive of an environment in which the principle of decentralization could have more force than an organization spread over 115 countries and mandated to be responsive and sensitive to the needs of each and every one of them. In this sense, decentralization is embedded in the principles underlying the UN operational system".

17. UNDP's decentralization policy is to be guided by the following general principles suggested in the internal strategy paper:

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[4] A Strategy-Based Senior Management Structure for the United Nations Development Programme (Kienbaum report), DP/1991/50, and comments thereon by the Administrator.

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(a) The organization's operational capacity should be designed from the country level outwards;

(b) key management decisions on UNDP's response to country requirements should be taken where the work is done;

(c) the location of units at Headquarters and in the field should be closely related to the technical requirements of the programme and to cost effectiveness;

(d) functions should be carried out where most cost-efficient and effective, and duplicative and redundant functions should be minimized or eliminated.

(e) information must be managed on the basis of different units needs for clear decision-making and to streamline basic support functions within the framework of a coherent and cohesive Management Information policy.

(f) resources supporting "line" functions should, to the extent possible, be integrated into "line structures".

(g) decentralization must emphasize the primacy of the Organization's policies over unit or field offices' individual approaches, thus securing and highlighting responsibility and accountability.

18. These principles, if indeed applied, may suggest the gravity of purpose guiding UNDP's approach to decentralization. Since the organization's strategic framework for achieving a results-oriented system of decentralization has several elements in common with the existing policies of other JCGP members, those of UNICEF in particular, the Inspector believes that the framework could constitute the basis for refining and consolidating a unified JCGP approach to decentralization, in the first instance, and subsequently for a system-wide policy plank on the issue.

III. THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

19. This Organization deserves its reputation of being a unique model of decentralization among the UN specialized agencies. The model derives from several factors.

20. Firstly, the design of WHO's Constitution, adopted in 1946, seems to have been heavily influenced by the desire to accommodate the Pan American Sanitary Organization, later renamed Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), which had already been in productive existence since 1917, thus predating WHO by 30 years. This may explain why chapter XI (articles 44-55) of the Constitution gives special prominence to "regional organizations", which consist of a regional committee (policy organ) and a regional office (secretariat). There are at present six regional organizations: Africa (AFRO), Americas (AMRO/PAHO), Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), Europe (EURO), South East Asia (SEARO) and the Western Pacific (WPRO). Although the Constitution stipulates that "each regional organization shall be an integral part of the Organization", the regional structures maintain a large degree of autonomy vis-a-vis headquarters,

and PAHO in particular continues to operate in management and budgetary terms as a separate organization. WHO presently finances only about 25 per cent of its budget.

21. Secondly, the Regional Directors who head the regional offices are another major factor in WHO's system of decentralization. Under Article 52 of the Constitution, the Directors are appointed by the Executive Board of WHO in agreement with the regional committees. In practice, however, they are elected by the governments of their respective regions and automatically endorsed by the Executive Board. The Director-General therefore has no role in the selection and appointment of the Regional Directors who are, however, expected under the Constitution to be accountable to him as "chief technical and administrative officer of the Organization".

22. Another comparable UN specialized agency with several elective offices is the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) where the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and eight other officials are elected by the Plenipotentiary Conference, although this number is expected to be reduced in 1994. In UNIDO and WIPO the Deputy Directors-General are appointed by the Director-General after approval by the policy organs. WHO Regional Directors differ significantly from their elected peers in other organizations in that they enjoy "sovereign attributes": constitutional writ, legislature, exclusive regional territory, a political constituency comprising heads of state or government and ministers of health, a distinct budget and an administrative organ. While the Constitution gives explicit overall responsibility and authority to the Director-General for the management of the Organization, in reality these prerogatives are shared with the Regional Directors who have significant political and managerial roles. The organization's decentralized system thus hinges on the political power relationships between the Director-General and the Regional Directors. For example, no constitutional or manual provisions exist for disciplinary action against the Regional Directors in case of evident professional misconduct. In many ways they define the practical relationships between the Director-General and the Member States of their respective regions.

23. Furthermore, WHO's programme policy is geared towards devolution of programme implementation responsibility to the Member States in the context of its global "Health for All strategy by year 2000". The Organization's programmes are in general identical to and supportive of the health programmes of its Member States. Emphasis is thus on a programme approach, which is the technical co-operation modality now increasingly urged on other organizations of the system. WHO's model is therefore not simply a question of decentralized structures only but even more fundamentally one of programme concept and policy.

24. This is borne out more explicitly by yet another factor: the central role of the regular budget in the funding of technical co-operation and the programme budgeting process. The regional offices which represent the organization's technical co-operation arms in their respective regions are financed essentially from the regular budget, close to 60 per cent of which is at present devoted to technical co-operation programmes. The World Health Assembly resolution 29/48 of 1976 makes it mandatory to allocate at least 60 per cent of the regular programme budget in real terms towards technical co-operation and provision of services to Member States. The programme budget formulation process starts from the country level with the assignment of allocations to each country depending on a set of factors. The proposed country allocations form the basis for

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preparing regional programme budget estimates which are approved, in the first instance, by the respective regional committees, and then consolidated by headquarters for the approval of the Executive Board and Health Assembly.

25. The foregoing factors are some of the main determinants of WHO's decentralized model which seems to have the ingredients necessary for it to function perfectly in an ideal world. But reality would have it otherwise. Several fruitless attempts have been made in the past within WHO itself to change the present system, however modestly, in order particularly to secure more rational utilization of the organization's overall programme resources and to increase accountability to the Director-General. The following major constraints may be worth mentioning:

(i) The potential for management difficulties between an elected Director-General and elected Regional Directors.

(ii) WHO is decentralized in effect from headquarters to the regional level but not sufficiently to the country level where its operations need strengthening.

(iii) The present mandatory pattern of allocating the regular programme budget between headquarters and the regions as well as governments' automatic entitlements to country budget allocations have significantly narrowed the organizations's options and ability to address new programme priorities and to match resources to high profile problems rather than to countries and regions as at present.

(iv) This limited control by headquarters over the distribution of the regular programme budget and its applications has partly contributed to an increasing trend to centralize extrabudgetary programmes at headquarters on the grounds that they are global, high-technology-driven programmes best delivered directly from headquarters.

(v) The regional offices very much operate in isolation from one another and seem to be more strongly identified with their respective regions than with the Organization as a whole. With few exceptions, these offices are predominantly staffed by persons from within their regions, and have thereby seriously weakened their world-wide international character. This is aggravated by limited staff mobility among the regions and between the regions and headquarters. Staff appointed by one Regional Director may not be acceptable in another region.

26. These constraints are further discussed in a separate report on WHO's system of decentralization to be issued shortly by the Inspector.

IV. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

27. The subject of decentralization has received considerable attention in recent years within UNESCO which specifically requested the present JIU report. Meanwhile in April 1991 the Special Committee of the Executive Board reviewed an internal in-depth study it had

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commissioned on the subject. The study which gives an X-ray account of UNESCO's decentralization experience over the years, is succinctly summarized below:

In-depth study on decentralization in UNESCO[5]

The study prepared by the Special Committee of the Executive Board traces in detail the history of decentralization policy and practice in UNESCO since 1947. It notes that, as early as the fifth session of the UNESCO General Conference, decentralization was held to be "a matter of vital importance which UNESCO should tackle to make its activities more effective". The very first experiments in decentralization were therefore made forty years ago in Science and Technology followed by the Education Sector.

The study observes however that, despite the numerous discussions of the subject over the decades and the resolutions of the General Conference, it was not until the early 1980s that several more offices were established in different parts of the world. These new structures were "highly sectoral" and had very limited authority and role in the formulation and implementation of UNESCO's programmes.

The study sees 1987 as marking the onset of genuine efforts to decentralize the Organization. The new momentum was promoted by a "broader plan to reform the structures, methods and working procedures of UNESCO", the aim being to consolidate its presence in the Member States as well as its participation in operational activities for development. Endorsed by the Executive Board and the General Conference, this new trend has, according to the study, been exemplified in several structural changes and other initiatives within UNESCO, such as the creation of the Bureau for the Co-ordination of Field Units (BFC), promotion of intersectorality or integrated field offices, modernization of communications and information systems, computerization of duty travel, etc.

The study commends these initiatives but concludes that "the level of decentralization achieved is still not satisfactory, and it does not fully correspond to either theory or practice. Moreover, the implications for UNESCO of United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/211 call for special attention to be paid to the theme of decentralization, its improvement and its practical limits".

28. The subject was discussed again at length at the 1992 Executive Board session of UNESCO which adopted measures defining the broad framework of the organization's decentralization policy. This policy should:

(a) be based on UNESCO's constitutional mandate and its international responsibilities for intellectual co-operation;

(b) provide a catalytic and multiplier effect on its activities;

(c) strengthen its presence in each region;

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[5] UNESCO document: 136 EX/SP/RAP/1, 12 April, 1991

(d) be flexible and adapted to the particular features and priorities of each region and sub-region;

(e) incorporate regional perspectives into the universal vision, to the mutual enrichment of both;

(f) cater more effectively to the needs of Member States;

(g) take into account the fact that UNESCO is neither a fund nor merely a technical assistance agency.

(h) Unesco's presence in the field should reflect its universal, moral and intellectual objectives in addition to its specific technical co-operation activities;

(i) authority and resources should be decentralized not only from Headquarters to certain large Regional Offices, but also among all the units within each region, thereby necessitating changes in attitude and practices as well as procedures;

(j) decentralization should on no account lead to the creation of mini-UNESCOs in the field, and the improvement of telecommunication linkages should serve to carry out field activities more effectively;

(k) UNESCO's staff within each region should reflect the Organization's universal character, etc; (see annex 2)

29. The decentralization policy would have the following aims:

(a) to stimulate the processes of consultation and active participation by Member States and their National Commissions in close association with field units, in the identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Organization's programmes and projects, promoting co-operation between UNESCO and the intellectual community in Member States;

(b) to contribute to the reform process designed to bring about changes in the structure, procedures and working methods of the Secretariat;

(c) to improve the capacity of field units to identify, design, implement and evaluate new programme activities and operational and extra-budgetary projects;

(d) to give wider publicity to UNESCO's message and to the importance of its work;

(e) to adapt UNESCO's programmes better to the particular conditions of the different regions, sub-regions and countries and enable it to respond more quickly and more efficiently to requests from Member States;

(f) to increase UNESCO's country-level effectiveness, having regard to United

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Nations resolution 44/211, which calls for greater integration of the work of the United Nations agencies in country programming.

30. The Director-General's follow-up actions since 1991 have included notably the strengthening of the Bureau for External Relations and a set of instructions on decentralization contained in DG/Note/92/3. These instructions particularly stress the inter-sectoral character of UNESCO's field units, the need to interact more effectively with the intellectual and technical communities at field level including inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, the development and strengthening of regional resource networks, information dissemination, the strengthening of the administrative and resource capacities of the field units, etc. The Organization has also taken steps to improve the staff profiles, technical competence and administrative functioning of these offices. Other more specific circulars have been issued spelling out the responsibilities, authorities and roles of the field units in all areas of UNESCO's activities.

V. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

31. Like UNESCO, FAO has in the past couple of years intensified efforts at decentralization pursuant to the directives of its policy organs. In terms of geographic coverage, the Organization currently has one of the largest representational networks in the UN system, with 74 Representatives accredited to over 100 countries, in addition to five regional offices. A Decentralization Support Unit established at headquarters since 1981 is supposed to represent a key node in the Organization's strategy.

32. The field network is backed by the Field Programme Development Division (DDF) which "plays the central role for the development of a field programme which renders satisfactory services to member countries' development efforts in line with the Organization's overall policies and priorities for agricultural, fisheries and forestry development". The Division performs a number of functions which could be considered eligible for decentralization to the country or regional level. This is especially true of the Regional Bureaux located within the Division but which could more suitably be located in the Regional Offices. The administration of field programmes and projects remains highly centralized at headquarters, where the area officers support an average of 40-50 projects each.

33. Another feature of FAO's decentralization is that, while Article VI of the Organization's Constitution implies a strong regional focus in calling inter-alia for "regional commissions", and "regional technical conferences" or for the establishment of regional offices, the latter are in fact overshadowed by the network of country offices, which have become the real spear-head of decentralization. The regional offices are responsible mainly for intercountry activities and promotion of regional policies within FAO's spheres of competence. Also, these offices are excluded from the chain of command and routine communications between the country offices and headquarters, and their resource allocations have recently been curtailed in order to strengthen the country offices. This is the converse of WHO's decentralized model.

34. The Inspector's discussions with FAO officials suggest that the Organization's recent

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record on decentralization is generally commendable but that much more remains to be done because significant resources and authority remain centralized at headquarters. For example, an increased direct technical co-operation role by the regional offices in support of country activities would not only strengthen the cost-benefit justification for these offices but also would considerably relieve work pressure on headquarters staff. The fact that FAO's country offices are severely strapped financially as noted in the 1989 report of the Programme and Finance Committees on the Review of FAO's Goals and Operations, may justify a selective strategy of country representation clearly based on a system of priorities, focusing on problems rather than on broad geographical representation.

35. Furthermore, the present system of decentralization may need to be reviewed in order to reduce what appears to the Inspector to be duplicative or overlapping structures of decentralization. It would seem necessary to redefine more tightly the respective indispensable roles of the following with respect to field operations. National project directors and chief technical advisers; country offices; regional offices; FAO joint divisions with the regional commissions, which could take on the responsibilities and functions of the regional offices; Decentralization Unit and Regional Bureaux at headquarters. Together these represent six different layers concerned with decentralization. Reference is also made here to one of the main recommendations of this report concerning UN system integrated regional development mechanisms, which would lead to significant savings in overhead costs for FAO in particular and for the UN system in general.

VI. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)

36. Article 38 of the Constitution of ILO provides for the convening of regional conferences and establishing of regional agencies as may be desirable to promote the aims and purposes of the Organisation. There are at present five regional offices (including the European regional office which is located at ILO headquarters). These offices oversee a network of 35 area/country offices in developing and developed countries, four regional vocational training centres, four regional employment teams and five regional labour administration centres.

37. The regional conferences which meet every 5-6 years and the regional advisory committees which meet annually, represent an important intergovernmental mechanism in the Organisation's model of decentralization. That mechanism is however purely technical and consultative in its relations with the ILO's General Conference and Governing Body. In this respect ILO's regional intergovernmental structures differ in powers and functions from WHO's regional committees.

38. Since 1985 ILO has conducted studies on its technical cooperation programme, structures and functions of its regional centres and relations between headquarters and field units. Following the conclusion of these studies, the Organisation has taken steps to reflect more adequately its tripartite character in its field activities, to delegate increased authority to the field offices and to trim its administrative procedures. Furthermore, the regional advisers who are an essential element in the ILO's decentralized structure, are being transformed into multidisciplinary advisory teams with the mandate to bring the ILO as close as possible to its constituents. In this regard, the Inspector believes that the Regional Office for the Middle East still provisionally located in

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Geneva should be moved back close to its constituency now that the situation in Lebanon has returned to normal.

39. More recently, the Director-General issued a circular (Series 6, No. 478 of 15 April 1992) which aims to strengthen the field orientation of ILO and more specifically to promote and formalize a system of staff rotation between headquarters and the field. The circular states inter-alia:

> "The new directions of ILO programmes call for changes and adjustments in relations between the field and headquarters. A more active dialogue between the Office and ILO constituents has become necessary. ILO services at the national level will move progressively from a project orientation to a programme-based approach. More effective and quicker service to constituents will require a strengthening of field programmes and increased integration of programmes in the field and those carried out in headquarters..".

40. This circular, the full text of which is to be found in annex 3 to this report, is important in that it seeks to develop a decentralization ethos for the ILO and staff:

- changes and adjustments in headquarters in support of an increased thrust in the field;
- integration of regular programme activities with the technical co-operation programme;
- the concept of field service as a coherent part of career planning and development;
- institution of a country programme-based approach in the field;
- systematic staff rotation between headquarters and field offices; etc.

This initiative is certainly worth emulation by other agencies.

VII. INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

41. A relatively small UN agency originally concerned almost exclusively with its standardization and regulatory mandates, ITU has made impressive progress since the mid-eighties to integrate development issues within the mainstream of its activities. Several ITU studies having demonstrated the pervasive socio-economic impact of telecommunications in the development process, the Organization moved in 1989 to amend its constitution and to establish a Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) as a separate permanent organ of the Union, concerned exclusively with technical co-operation. The BDT has already established twelve regional and area offices and is assisting in various telecommunications fields including training institutions and satellite communication projects in the developing countries. A new concept in the BDT is the institution of World and Regional Development Conferences where telecommunication development policies and financing strategies are discussed and adopted by governments themselves at both global and regional level.

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VIII. UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)

42. UNIDO has been involved since 1987 in the restructuring of its secretariat in order to adapt it to reflect the needs of industrialization of the developing countries and to strengthen its regional and interregional focus, among other objectives. The Organization's field representation rests on the UNIDO Country Directors (UCD) who number 36 at present. Following a 1989 Memorandum of Understanding between UNIDO and UNDP concerning the integration of the UNIDO field service within the UNDP Field Office, the UNDP Resident Representative has in effect become the formal UNIDO representative in each country, the UCD serving as his deputy in each case. The UNIDO field representation is thus fully integrated within the UNDP field offices. This arrangement may be explained by the fact that close to 80 per cent of UNIDO's UCD programme is financed by UNDP under sectoral support allocations. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the UCD may have direct contacts with the host government in all matters of programme development and formulation, but must use the UNDP channel of communication in all other areas of activity. UNIDO retains responsibility for the personnel and financial administration of the UCD programme based on its staff and financial regulations, but support staff attached to the UCD can hold contracts with either UNIDO or UNDP. UNIDO relies extensively on Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) who are provided cost-free by donor governments. The JPOs, who number about 50 at any given time, are selected by UNIDO but hold UNDP contracts.

43. In his discussions with UNIDO officials the Inspector noted a strong body of opinion to seek revision of the Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP, which many UCDs view as an undue restriction on their operating autonomy. It would seem that there is a strong desire both in the field and headquarters to expand UNIDO's field representation, but that such expansion would be difficult to achieve under present financial arrangements with UNDP and so long as UNIDO's policy organs for lack of resources continue to oppose the use of the regular budget to fund the UCD programme.

44. Another non-negligible feature of UNIDO's decentralization consists of its joint divisions with the UN Regional Economic Commissions in the developing countries. Under these arrangements the Organization provides regional advisory services in the area of industrial development to the commissions and benefits from the latter's cross-sectoral perspective on regional development issues.

IX. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

45. The IAEA has two regional offices, one in Tokyo and the other in Toronto. The two offices provide safeguard inspection services in their respective regions in a more effective and efficient manner than is possible from the Agency's Vienna headquarters. These offices are directly linked to the Agency's central Department of Safeguards. Twenty-three of the 500 staff members within the Department are assigned to the two regional offices, where they facilitate the carrying out of inspections required by Article 3 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and are utilized for other purposes mutually agreed upon with the Member States.

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46. The Agency operates a substantial technical co-operation programme valued at $50 million in 1991, which provides expertise, equipment and training in a wide variety of nuclear applications. A total of 1160 man-months of expertise were provided in 1991 through 1463 expert missions, and 2351 persons received training as fellows, training course participants or through scientific visits.

47. Whereas the funds for technical co-operation programme are based on voluntary contribution by Member States, the Agency's Department of Technical Co-operation, which programmes and implements the assistance involved, is financed from the Agency's regular budget. In addition, all departments of the Agency are actively involved in the appraisal and technical backstopping of the technical corporation programme and technical co-operation related functions are an integral part of the workload of technical officers in all substantive divisions of IAEA. They often also carry out expert missions to developing countries under various technical co-operation projects. Separate from its Technical Corporation activities the Agency also operates a Co-ordinated Research Programme through which in 1991 a total of 521 research contracts were awarded to scientists and institutes in developing countries.

48. Probably unique in the UN system is the FAO IAEA Joint Division, which deals with nuclear applications in agriculture and constitutes a successful example of inter-agency collaboration. The IAEA's Seibersdorf Laboratory in Austria, in addition to doing scientific work and backstopping technical co-operation projects, also functions as a training centre which in 1991 received 104 fellows and hosted three training courses. However, the training courses programme of the IAEA is largely decentralized: of the total of 109 training courses organized by IAEA in 1991, 88 took place in developing countries. Notwithstanding the fact that most training possibilities for the sophisticated techniques the Agency deals with are located in industrialized countries, around 20% of Agency's individual fellowship holders are placed in institutes in developing countries.

49. The Agency has been actively stimulating regional co-operation. Under its aegis a Regional Co-operation Agreement for Asia and the Pacific (RCA) covering 14 countries has been successfully promoting peaceful applications of atomic energy in agriculture and medicine and, with particular effect, in the industrial field. A similar programme exists for Latin America (ARCAL) and another has recently been established for Africa (AFRA). It is the view of the Inspector that the Agency should further strengthen its presence in the developing regions taking advantage of recommendation 6 in Part I of this report and without prejudice to its central constitutional role.

X. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

50. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has six regional offices whose role in technical co-operation appears inhibited by a host of internal factors reviewed in a recent JIU report: "Forward-Looking Assessment of the Technical Co-operation Programme of the International Civil Aviation Organization" (JIU/REP/92/3). The report urged ICAO to follow the example of ITU by integrating its technical co-operation programme with its regular programme so as more effectively to assist the developing countries to play their full part in fostering the planning and development of safe, orderly and efficient international air transport. In this

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respect, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) should be commended on its internal reform efforts of the last decade to achieve a technical co-operation strategy based on a network of training institutions and activities around the world. The Organization has successfully moved beyond the separation in other small agencies between technical co-operation and normative, standard-setting functions. It currently has five regional advisers who, together with the World Maritime University in Sweden and regional networks of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC), represent the central feature of its decentralized, out-reach strategy.

51. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has three small regional offices responsible for programme development in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Asia office is located in Geneva. Further decentralization is currently not under active consideration in WMO.

52. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has constitutionally decentralized structures consisting of regional postal unions which serve as technical transmission belts between the Organization's headquarters in Bern (Switzerland) and the postal administrations of its Member States. In addition, UPU has recently established regional advisory services comprising six technical co-operation experts.

53. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which is among the most centralized organizations, reports that is has two small offices away from its Geneva headquarters: one in New York (one staff member) and the other in Vienna (three staff members). WIPO further observes that "further decentralization per se would involve significant overhead costs which would be relatively expensive for such a small Organization". The Inspector does not share this view since other organizations even smaller than WIPO, such as IMO and UPU, have found it necessary and feasible to establish a minimum field presence, and decentralization should not be considered exclusively in terms of overhead costs.

54. WIPO argues, nonetheless, that its programme activities reflect interactions with its Member States, notably through the services of 52 national and regional patent offices, CD-ROM technology which is made available to the Member States, and widespread venues for meetings. In the view of the Inspector, however, these methods of interaction with the global constituency are equally used by virtually all UN system organizations and cannot therefore be considered an adequate substitute for effective decentralization of staff to the field level in order to nurture more closely WIPO's expanding technical co-operation activities.

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ANNEX 1

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46/235 ON THE RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZING OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS.

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Recommendations of the regional commissions on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/235

1. In paragraph 6 of the annex to its resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the General Assembly called for the regional commissions to be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and for the strengthening of their effectiveness. It also requested the regional commissions, in this context, to provide recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

2. Each of the five regional commissions has responded to this request by the General Assembly as follows:

(a) ECE: The Economic Commission for Europe adopted, at a special session on 5 October 1992, resolution 1 (1992-S) on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields: Strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe;

(b) ESCAP: The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, through its resolution 48/12 of 23 April 1992, directed the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) to seek the views of members and associate members and to draft a response to the General Assembly. ACPR, on 21 September 1992, agreed to its response to General Assembly resolution 46/235 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields;

(c) ECLAC: The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted, on 15 April 1992, resolution 520 (XXIV) on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: role and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(d) ECA: The Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa adopted, on 22 April 1992, resolution 728 (XXVII) on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions, and resolution 726 (XXVII) on strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s;

(e) ESCWA: The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted, on 2 September 1992, resolution 191 (XVI) on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

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3. The texts of the above resolutions and responses are reproduced below.

I. RESOLUTION 1 (1992-S) ENTITLED "RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, PARTICULARLY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE", ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE ON 5 OCTOBER 1992

The Economic Commission for Europe,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and *noting* in its paragraph 6 that the regional commissions are requested to provide recommendations, for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, on strengthening their effectiveness,

Bearing in mind its mandate, for raising the level of European economic activity and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world, and *conscious* of its role as an instrument for the implementation of the principles and aims of the United Nations Charter at the regional level,

Noting that the ECE membership has increased from 34 in 1990 to 43 at the present time, among them a considerable number of newly independent States, a further increase being likely to occur,

Aware that this recent development adds a new dimension to the Commission and has placed new and urgent demands on ECE and its secretariat, in terms of economic cooperation and assistance, in particular in the context of the transition process,

Convinced that the strengthening of cooperation in the economic and related fields within the framework of ECE constitutes a major contribution from the United Nations system to the efforts presently undertaken in the region to assist countries in their transition to market economies and their integration into the world economy, and represents an important contribution to global economic and social development,

Taking into account the increased efforts made by the international community to assist the economies in transition by actions taken in other fora such as, among others, IMF, IBRD, EBRD, OECD and the G24,

Noting the recognition by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in its Charter of Paris for a New Europe (November 1990) and in its Helsinki Summit Declaration and Decisions (July 1992) of "a key role" to be played by ECE, together with EBRD and OECD, in the construction of a new Europe,

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Convinced of the necessity to ensure, in response to Economic and Social Council decision 1992/43, that all ECE member States can participate fully and effectively in the work of the Commission,

1. Draws the attention of the General Assembly to the following elements:

(a) The comparative advantages of ECE as a multilateral forum for all-European cooperation in the economic and related fields, with an important trans-Atlantic dimension, where all member States participate on an equal footing; the longevity of cooperation among all countries of ECE region, which has over the years provided ECE with a profound knowledge of those countries, their problems and their priorities; its well-established intergovernmental machinery and network of government contacts; and its capacity for an interdisciplinary approach and for the adaptation of its programme of work;

(b) The important contribution made by ECE to the process of restructuring and the revitalization of the regional commissions of the United Nations, called for in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 45/264, through its decisions O (45) and P (45) adopted, on 14 December 1990, in response to the rapid and radical changes in the region after an in-depth review of its programme and methods of work, namely by establishing five priority areas of work and by streamlining the structure and the activities of the Commission;

(c) The necessity to strengthen the cooperation and the coordination of activities between ECE and other international organisations, institutions and programmes both within and outside the United Nations system in order to avoid duplication of work and to ensure optimal use of resources;

2. Stresses:

(a) The concern of the ECE member States regarding the timely provision of adequate resources for servicing of the priority sectors of ECE, requested in its decision B (47), and hindered by the temporary suspension of external recruitment; the protracted procedure for the appointment of staff; and delays in the allotment in ECE's budgetary allocation;

(b) The importance of a speedy and effective implementation of the ECE programme in favour of the countries in transition initiated by ECE decisions D (45), O (45) and D (47), and the need to explore ways and means of releasing and obtaining adequate resources for this programme;

3. Recommends, in the light of the experience gained by ECE since its internal restructuring and revitalization process started in December 1990 and in order to continue in the future to fulfil efficiently its mandate, that the following measures should be taken:

(a) As recommended in paragraph 26, section IV, of the annex to Assembly resolution 32/197, the necessary authority should be delegated from

Headquarters to ECE and adequate budgetary and financial provision should be made to enable ECE to implement its mandated programme of work and to discharge its responsibility for coordination and cooperation at the regional level within the United Nations system, in close cooperation with the efforts undertaken by other relevant international bodies;

(*b*) In order to avoid duplication of work under way in ECE by other United Nations programmes and to ensure a more rational use of available resources, action should be taken to achieve a more effective distribution of responsibilities and a better balance of functions between ECE, on the one hand, and Headquarters and global programmes outside Headquarters, on the other hand;

(*c*) The results of ECE activities should continue to constitute regional inputs for global policy-making processes and conferences of the competent United Nations organs, and ECE should be invited to participate fully in the regional implementation of the relevant policy and programme decisions taken by those organs;

(*d*) The results of ECE's programme and operational project activities, wherever appropriate, should continue to be made available for the benefit of the countries of the other regions, by means of a strengthened outreach programme, such as UN/EDIFACT, and interregional cooperation with the other regional commissions and the global programmes of the United Nations;

4. *Also recommends* that the activities undertaken at the regional level, in the economic, social and related fields, by relevant United Nations organs, be regularly and efficiently evaluated, in order to reach a high quality of work and an efficient use of available resources;

5. *Decides* to transmit this resolution to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations as a contribution of ECE for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields being currently undertaken by the General Assembly.

II. RESPONSE OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46/235 ON RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

At its forty-eighth session held at Beijing in April 1992, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific took note of General Assembly resolution 46/235 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. It focused its discussion on paragraph 6 of the annex to that resolution, in which the regional commissions were requested to provide recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

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In view of the need for comprehensive study, the Commission, through its resolution 48/12, directed the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) to seek the views of members and associate members and to draft a response to the General Assembly. ACPR, after receiving responses to the letter sent by the Executive Secretary on its behalf, agreed to the points set out below.

1. Members and associate members of the Commission noted that the effectiveness of the regional commissions, particularly those located in developing countries, should be strengthened in terms of their activities and participation in the operational activities of the United Nations system.

2. In the restructuring and revitalization process under way in the economic and social fields of the United Nations, due consideration should be accorded to the usefulness of the regional. multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach which has characterized the work of the Commission.

3. Strengthening the participation of regional commissions in the United Nations system would reflect their advantageous position in identifying common approaches and translating these into concrete proposals for all the parties concerned. They can also make a positive contribution in promoting constructive dialogue within the United Nations system regarding economic and social development issues.

4. The process of strengthening regional commissions and improving their responsiveness to the needs of members and associate members can be enhanced through further consensus-building, broad democratic participation, and transparency in all decision-making processes. The importance of political will and commitment in enhancing international cooperation, particularly in the United Nations system, should also be noted.

5. ESCAP members and associate members wish to emphasize to the General Assembly that the recent experience of the Commission in agreeing to, and commencing the implementation of, a new intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission represented an important contribution to both the restructuring in the ESCAP region and the United Nations system as a whole.

6. The new thematic approach will, in the view of ESCAP members and associate members, considerably improve the responsiveness of the Commission to the needs of members and associate members and therefore contribute to the revitalization of the United Nations. They also believe that this restructuring will contribute to an effective, as well as accountable and transparent, utilization of resources in achieving the goals of the Commission.

7. ESCAP members and associate members recognize that the strengthening of the role of the regional commissions must be accomplished despite zero growth in the regular budget of the United Nations, and must reflect the overall objective of an efficient organization, which underlies the restructuring and revitalization process.

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8. The members and associate members of ESCAP, therefore, recommend that in the restructuring and revitalisation of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields being undertaken by the General Assembly, the desirability of the following should be considered:

(a) Increased decentralisation in the execution of activities in the new organizational structure of the United Nations, based on the concept that endeavours of the Organization in these fields can be carried out more efficiently and effectively at the regional and subregional levels;

(b) Enhanced access by the Commission to more of the resources under the regular programme of technical cooperation of the United Nations available under section 12 of its programme budget; and increased funding from programmes and agencies of the United Nations system for the regional technical cooperation activities of the Commission;

(c) Revised allocation to ESCAP of regular budget resources taking into account the region's share of the world population, geographical scope, expanding membership, considerable economic and social diversity, and active Commission programming, and efforts to restructure work programmes based on a thematic approach;

(d) Improved effectiveness of the technical cooperation activities provided by the United Nations to countries, through strengthening the technical and financial capacity of the Commission to undertake relevant and balanced operational activities and technical cooperation projects at the regional and subregional levels in Asia and the Pacific. The Commission, by virtue of its mandate and in the light of its structural reorientation, is in a better position to respond effectively to the changing needs of the region;

(e) Improved coordination and Secretariat-wide coherence by reinforcing the activities of the regional commissions aimed at mutually supporting the activities of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in their respective regions through, *inter alia*, intensifying joint activities, programming exercises and coordinating meetings;

(f) Clearly divided responsibilities between the regional commissions and the funding agencies of the United Nations on regional and subregional technical cooperation activities. In view of the decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to reduce the UNDP and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) allocations for regional IPFs (indicative planning figures), regional and subregional programmes must be prioritized to avoid costly duplication, in the course of project formulation and subsequent implementation and monitoring;

(g) Mandating ESCAP as the primary executing agency for regional and subregional programmes, within the United Nations system, so as to centralize coordination tasks and reduce costs. Regional commissions have been designated as the lead coordinators of inter-agency functions and regional activities, and as the main general economic and social development centres

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within the United Nations system for their respective regions for coordination at the regional and subregional levels. This mandate should not prevent the regional commissions from inviting other United Nations funding agencies to function as team leaders for specific programmes, when appropriate;

(h) Strengthening of the professional capacity of the Commission, so as to improve the technical response of ESCAP to specific needs and requests of developing countries, particularly the least developed, land-locked developing and island developing countries and in relation to new issues identified by the Commission of which transitional disadvantaged economies are examples;

(i) Establishing more pragmatic and flexible rules relating to the provision of non-reimbursable loan experts at the regional level so as to increase the will of donor countries to raise the level and importance of their contributions in kind in response to priority needs;

(j) With a view to strengthening and increasing the effectiveness of regional institutions under the auspices of ESCAP, consideration should be given to providing financial support from the United Nations regular budget;

(k) Broader participation in Commission sessions and regional intergovernmental meetings from countries facing onerous travel expenses through the provision of special travel funds from the regular budget for land-locked developing, least developed and Pacific island developing countries.

III. RESOLUTION 520 (XXIV) ENTITLED "RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELDS: ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN", ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ON 15 APRIL 1992

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 40/237, 41/213 and 43/174 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 44/103 and 45/177 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields,

Bearing in mind also section IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 45/264, which calls for a review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to be carried out at the forty-sixth session of the Assembly with the objective of possible restructuring and revitalization and with a view to avoiding duplication,

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Noting the steps already announced by the Secretary-General regarding the restructuring of the Secretariat in order to respond effectively to the challenges facing it,

Noting also General Assembly resolution 46/235,

Recalling Committee of the Whole resolution 419(PLEN.14) on the rationalisation of the institutional structure and the pattern of meetings of the ECLAC system, and resolution 489(PLEN.19) on the intergovernmental structure and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Re-emphasising its conviction that the activities entrusted to the Commission by Economic and Social Council resolution 106 (VI) are fully consistent with the development efforts of its member countries, within the broader context of a revitalized programme of the United Nations in the economic and social fields,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* for the effective work performed by the Commission and for its significant contribution to economic thinking and to Latin American and Caribbean development efforts in both the analytical and operational fields and in the realm of intraregional and international economic cooperation;

2. *Expresses its conviction* that the restructuring and revitalisation process under way in the economic and social fields of the United Nations should accord due consideration to the usefulness of the regional, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach which has characterised the work of the Commission;

3. *Recommends* that the restructuring and revitalisation of the United Nations in the economic and social fields being currently undertaken by the General Assembly consider the desirability of:

(a) Increased decentralization in the execution of activities in the new organisational structure which is being created, based on the concept that the endeavours of the Organisation in these fields can be carried out more efficiently and effectively at the field level on a regional and subregional basis;

(b) Improved coordination and Secretariat-wide coherence by reinforcing the activities of the regional commissions aimed at mutually supporting the activities of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in their respective regions through, *inter alia*, intensifying joint activities and emphasising joint programming exercises and meetings;

(c) A clear division of responsibilities regarding regional technical cooperation activities between the regional commissions on the one hand and the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population

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Fund on the other, in particular by requesting coordination prior to the submission of regional projects and activities to Governments;

(d) Improved effectiveness of the technical cooperation activities provided by the United Nations to countries - through the intermediary of the regular programme of technical cooperation - by decentralizing more of the resources allotted to the Commission under section 12 of the budget and by strengthening its capacity as an agency responsible for executing operational activities and technical cooperation projects at the regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the Commission, by virtue of its programme of work, is in a better position to take action;

4. Expresses the conviction that the simplicity of the intergovernmental structure of the ECLAC system (which includes ILPES and CELADE) and the procedure of holding meetings of the Commission in biennial sessions have proved to be effective in meeting the objectives of the Commission;

5. Decides to transmit this resolution, together with the relevant section of the report of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission and, as a background paper, the document entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: role and functions of ECLAC" (LC/G.1716(SES.24/18)) to the intergovernmental bodies which are currently charged with the restructuring exercise.

IV. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA ON 22 APRIL 1992

A. Resolution 728 (XXVII) entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: strengthening the role and functions of the regional commission"

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by Economic and Social Council resolution 671 (XXV) of 29 April 1958 and amended by its resolutions 974 D.I (XXXVI) of July 1963, 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further the Economic and Social Council's decision to endorse ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 718 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991 on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and those located in developing countries should be strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization process,

Convinced that the Economic Commission for Africa plays a vital catalytic role in the coordination and execution of intercountry programmes and projects aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and integration, especially by pursuing the establishment of the African Economic Community,

1. Reaffirms the continuing validity of the role of the regional economic commissions as important organs of the United Nations for promoting the socio-economic development of their respective regions;

2. Appeals to the Secretary-General that, in the context of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, due recognition is accorded to the vital role of the regional commissions.

B. Resolution 726 (XXVII) entitled "Strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990"

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by Economic and Social Council resolution 671 (XXV) of 29 April 1958 and amended by its resolutions 974 D.I (XXXVI) of July 1963, 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further the various resolutions that have implications on the mandate and operations of the Commission including, in particular, General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and General Assembly resolutions 33/202 of 29 January 1979 and 44/211 of 21 December 1989,

Noting with appreciation the endorsement by the Economic and Social Council of ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 718 (XXVI) on the revitalisation of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalisation of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and those located in developing countries strengthened in the

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context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization process,

Reiterating the validity of the general orientation of the work programme of the Commission as outlined in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, including the identified individual subprogrammes,

Convinced that the many and important changes that are taking place in the member States of the Commission, the international environment as well as in the United Nations system as a whole will necessitate new approaches by the Commission in carrying out its mandate and new relationships with its constituency and partners, with a view to increasing its impact,

Having examined the in-depth analysis made by the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission as contained in document E/ECA/CM.18/4 entitled "The Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s: a policy and management framework for facing Africa's development challenges",

1. Congratulates the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission for the initiative he took to establish a Task Force to review and appraise the Commission's policy orientation, programmes and management capacity and for the excellent analysis of the pertinent issues and useful and innovative proposals he has made;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that there is a clear and concrete balance between the research and operational activities of the secretariat of the Commission and to sharply focus all such activities of the Commission on the specific realities and characteristics of the African region and of individual subregions;

3. Also requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that its activities are fully grounded in sound data and information systems, through the strengthening of the Pan-African Development Information System, which should be provided with adequate financial resources;

4. Further requests the Executive Secretary to ascertain that the implementation of all subprogrammes contained in the work programme of the Commission is geared to the full attainment of the identified basic indicators of achievement of the objectives of the Commission with regard to: strengthening its advisory role on socio-economic questions; promoting regional cooperation and integration; enhancing the efficiency of the public sector; promoting private initiative and entrepreneurship; promoting the development, dissemination and utilization of science and technology; ensuring a desirable balance between food supply, population, human settlements and environment; fostering human-centred development; securing the structural transformation and diversification of African economies; and promotion of women in development;

5. Welcomes the process of frequent and close consultations of the secretariat with the member States and donors through the regular briefing sessions held with their representatives at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

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6. Recommends the establishment, within existing resources, of a consultative mechanism that would advise the Executive Secretary on the grouping of conferences along specific themes, including scheduling and the preparation of conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops, taking into account the need to harmonise them with those of the Organisation of African Unity and the African Development Bank, to avoid duplication and achieve greater efficiency;

7. Urges the Executive Secretary of the Commission to explore every possibility of establishing or strengthening the relationships of the Commission with African intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations specialized agencies, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and non-governmental organizations including, in particular, the possibility of establishing joint units or special programmes with the various United Nations specialized agencies, and the creation of a special unit within the secretariat of the Commission to coordinate its increased joint activities with non-governmental organizations;

8. Expresses appreciation to the General Assembly for providing additional resources to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and consequently recommends that in conformity with ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 702 (XXV) of 19 May 1990 on transforming and strengthening the MULPOCs of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Centres should be further strengthened through redeployment of resources and be given specific assignments with respect to technical assistance and advisory services for the execution of joint projects of member States within the framework of the intergovernmental organizations, in their respective subregions, and thus be enabled to act as the major subregional focal points for the collection and dissemination of information on all aspects of economic cooperation and integration;

9. Also expresses its gratitude to the General Assembly for providing a grant to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning for funding four additional posts for the 1992-1993 biennium thus enabling the Institute to contribute to the process of strengthening the operational capacity of the Commission in meeting the challenges facing Africa in the 1990s, and requests the redeployment of resources which would enable the Institute to assume additional responsibility;

10. Requests the Executive Secretary, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to undertake a thorough examination of the problems and constraints facing the ECA-sponsored institutions and subsequently to make concrete proposals aimed at alleviating their various problems including consideration of such options as the merging of some of the institutions;

11. Appeals to bilateral and multilateral donors to increase their financial and other forms of assistance to the Commission to enable it to shoulder its responsibilities to the member States by conducting extrabudgetary operational activities;

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12. Requests the Executive Secretary to undertake, as may become necessary, reforms in the structure of the secretariat so as to achieve full consistency with the new orientations recommended herein so as to boost the efficiency and capability of the secretariat as an effective tool for the economic and social development of Africa;

13. Requests the Executive Secretary to report on the progress made in the implementation of this resolution to the nineteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers and twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

V. RESOLUTION 191 (XVI) ENTITLED "RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS", ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1992

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and the leading role therein assigned to the regional commissions as regards the coordination of activities of the system within their regions,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and in particular paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 46/235 concerning the strengthening of the regional commissions,

Recalling further the terms of reference of the Commission as contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973,

Referring to Commission resolution 175 (XV) of 18 May 1989 on the strengthening of the role and performance of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Aware of the advantages to be derived from the capacity of the regional commissions in operational activities, particularly at the regional level,

Noting the steps already taken by the Secretary-General in restructuring the Secretariat,

1. Expresses its appreciation of the manner in which the secretariat of the Commission has addressed the obstacles encountered as a result of recent events in the region, regaining a level of operations close to the pre-crisis level in a relatively short period of time;

2. Commends the secretariat for the valuable services rendered to countries of the region in convening major meetings, providing advisory services and preparing analytical reports;

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3. Reiterates its conviction that the Commission has a central role to play within the United Nations system and in coordination with other concerned entities to improve economic and social conditions in the region;

4. Recommends that the potential of the Commission for coordinating, initiating and realising development activities for the benefit of member States be strengthened;

5. Recommends also in this connection that the following objectives be made part of the process of the restructuring currently under way in the United Nations:

(a) Decentralisation of those activities that could be more effectively undertaken by the regional commissions and of the human and financial resources required (e.g. as regards regional advisory services);

(b) Improvement of the arrangements for coordination of development activities carried out by parties inside and outside the United Nations system, through exchange of information among agencies and institutions involved;

(c) Promoting joint programming of the activities of the United Nations involving the regional commissions and active participation of the regional commissions in the programming and budgeting process as it relates to their activities, *inter alia*, thorough representation on the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board; [a]

(d) Strengthening the role of the regional commissions as executing agencies for regional and subregional technical cooperation projects in particular;

(e) Confirmation of the distinction between funding and executing agencies;

(f) Pursuit of joint activities with other organizations of the United Nations system, as appropriate;

6. Authorizes the Executive Secretary to reorganize the secretariat of the Commission in consultation with the Secretary-General to enhance the effectiveness of its activities;

7. Invites member States to replenish the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities in order to bolster the operational activities of ESCWA for the benefit of countries of the region and requests the Executive Secretary to follow up with member States;

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[a] With reference to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation (E/1992/65, para. 169 (c)).

8. *Decides* to transmit the present resolution and the ESCWA report on the subject b/ to the intergovernmental bodies with the current restructuring process of the United Nations Secretariat.

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b/ E/ESCWA/16/10.

ANNEX 2

MEASURES ADOPTED ON DECENTRALIZATION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO AT ITS 136TH SESSION IN MAY 1991.

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Item 3.3 - In-depth study on decentralization (136 EX/SP/RAP/1 and Corr.)

At the close of the discussion on this matter, the Special Committee recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Considering the important part played by the decentralization process in efforts to reform the structure, procedures and working methods of the Organization,

2. Recalling the resolutions of the General Conference and the decisions of the Executive Board endorsing the decentralization policy, particularly 25 C/Resolution 15.22 and 132 EX/Decision 5.1.2(iv),

3. Recognizing that resolution 44/211 of the General Assembly of the United Nations implies that UNESCO should increase its presence in Member States, both to participate in country programming and to increase its effectiveness in regard to the requirements of each Member State,

4. Having noted the Director-General's preliminary report on decentralization in document 135 EX/25 and the measures he has already taken to rationalize and improve the procedures and working methods of the Organization in response to those resolutions,

5. Convinced that a sound policy of decentralization applied with necessary flexibility to accommodate the distinctive features of individual regions will help to enhance the universality of UNESCO's message, in keeping with its role as an international agency for intellectual co-operation,

6. Having examined the report by the Working Group of the Special Committee on decentralization,

7. Congratulates the Working Group on the excellent quality of its work;

8. Endorses the Special Committee's initial recommendations which are annexed to this decision;

9. Notes that a clear policy and strategy of action for decentralization, taking account of its financial programme and other implications will have to be further elaborated in the light of the Working Group's report;

10. Invites the Working Group of the Special Committee to explore further, in collaboration with the Director-General, what pattern of decentralization would best serve the specificities of each region and subregion in the context of existing financial constraints and report back to the 137th session.

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SECTION I: Recommendations concerning the general decentralization policy

1. UNESCO needs an explicit and coherent decentralization policy, duly concerted and formulated and based on its mandate under its Constitution and its role as an international organization for intellectual co-operation. This policy will be a catalyst and will have multiplier effects on its action and assignments so as to strengthen UNESCO's presence in the different regions of the world and enable it to be attuned to its Member States in order better to respond to their needs.

2. A healthy decentralization policy should not be designed in response to non-recurrent needs or conjunctural pressure, but should be defined within the general framework of the Organization's programme of work and as **one of the key elements of the reform of its structures, procedures and working methods.** Decentralization is viewed as a working tool, a strategy and a working mechanism for enhancing the efficacy and quality of UNESCO's action. It is a means and not an end in itself.

3. The decentralization policy should be designed so as to facilitate interaction between regional perspectives and emerging universal vision and thus **to stimulate mutual enrichment.** The degree of decentralization must be determined in the light of the broad purposes and goals of UNESCO as enshrined in its Constitution, especially with respect to its specific mandate for intellectual co-operation, and how these may be pursued more widely and effectively at the level of the Member States.

4. The decentralization policy should be **flexible**, in that it should adapt to the particular features and priorities of the different regions and subregions of the world.

5. The decentralization policy should take into account the fact that **UNESCO is neither a funding body nor a technical-assistance agency**, but an agency for intellectual co-operation.

6. The process of decentralization must take into account the diversity of the programmes to be implemented, as well as the particularity of the regions, subregions and countries and in all cases it must achieve the setting up of a partnership with the local intellectual community.

7. Decentralization should be implemented as a **process** having very clear objectives and keeping pace with the strengthening, in every sense, of the field offices. A pre-condition for its implementation is the existence, in all sectors of the Secretariat, of a decentralization ethos that can generate an attitude favourable to the process. It is hoped that the process could achieve its objectives within a reasonable period - i.e. one or two biennia.

8. We recommend, for the present time, that the following, inter alia, be considered **the ends or aims of decentralization**:

(a) to stimulate the processes of consultation and active participation by Member States and their National Commissions, in close association with field units, in the identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Organization's programmes and projects, promoting co-operation between UNESCO and the intellectual community in Member States;

(b) to contribute to the reform process designed to bring about changes in the structure, procedures and working methods of the Secretariat;

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(c) to improve the capacity of field offices to identify, design, implement and evaluate new programme activities and operational and extra-budgetary projects;

(d) to give wider publicity to UNESCO's message and to the importance of its work;

(e) to adapt UNESCO's programmes better to the particular conditions of the different regions, subregions and countries and enable it to respond more quickly and more effectively to requests from Member States;

(f) to increase UNESCO's country-level effectiveness, having regard to United Nations resolution 44/211, which calls for greater integration of the work of the United Nations agencies in country programming, taking into consideration its mission and its own capacity.

9. Decentralization can only be effectively managed if the directors/heads of field offices assume authority over and responsibility for all staff, programmes and projects assigned to those offices irrespective of the Headquarters sectors from which resources are obtained. Similarly, effective management of decentralization also requires that sufficient authority for taking decisions in the field is decentralized to them.

10. With special emphasis, we recommend that it be borne in mind, for the purposes of the decentralization policy, that in accordance with the Charter of National Commissions as approved by the General Conference, the **National Commissions should play an important role in the implementation of decentralization**, as the Commissions are the most appropriate bodies for liaison between UNESCO, national authorities and the academic, scientific and artistic communities of Member States. Duly strengthened by their own governments, and also, whenever necessary, by means of the measure provided for under Article VII.3 of UNESCO's Constitution, the National Commissions should be one of the **facilitators** of the decentralization policy, co-ordinating their action closely with the offices established by UNESCO in the field and with their own governments. For this purpose, the Executive Board and the Director-General should develop a specific strategy for assisting governments in order to ensure that their National Commissions are able to discharge their constitutional responsibilities as per Article VII of UNESCO's Constitution.

SECTION II: Recommendations concerning the structure and functions of field offices

1. Within UNESCO's network of field offices, there should be a clearly designated 'contact point' established by UNESCO for each Member State, to represent the whole Organization, provided with full and relevant information and to be its intermediary in the field. Its area of responsibility could cover several Member States. (The memo (DDG/M/91/Memo 237) recently circulated in the Secretariat is wholly consistent with this recommendation.)

2. We recommend the integrated intersectoral office formula. The question of whether, during the first stage, emphasis should be laid on regional or on subregional offices should be approached in the light of the needs of each region.

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3. The 'integrated offices' model and the interaction between offices and institutions in a region would transform the present markedly unisectoral profile of the Regional Offices. Each UNESCO field office should represent the main sectors of the Organization and its staff would constitute an indispensable minimum number of specialists ('critical mass') in UNESCO's fields of competence, with emphasis on those fields most relevant to the priorities of the region or subregion. The composition of the staff should reflect UNESCO's international make-up, although national and regional expertise should be recognized and represented in the Professional staff of the regional and subregional offices. It is understood that the strengthening of personnel in the Regional Offices should not undermine the 'critical mass' at Headquarters for programme purposes.

4. We recommend that UNESCO abandon the strictly diplomatic form of representation by one person, which serves practically no useful purpose. Now that those offices have been attached to programme sectors in document 26 C/5 they should be given specific programme responsibilities. Their role and powers in relation to regional/subregional offices and to Headquarters should be clearly determined and stated. All this presupposes that regroupings will be carried out only after negotiation with the interested Member States, since they will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this new strategy.

5. In future, UNESCO field offices should be identified only as UNESCO offices followed by the name of the city in which they are located: UNESCO Office, Nairobi; UNESCO Office, Bangkok; UNESCO Office, Caracas; UNESCO Office, Santiago; UNESCO Office, Cairo; and so forth.

6. The personnel of the field offices should as necessary be strengthened by staff from Headquarters and other Regional Offices on short assignments, without ruling out longer tours of duty under a genuine staff rotation policy.

7. With a view to strengthening the staff of the field offices, we took note of the creation of a new category of Professional staff consisting of national Professionals hired for fixed periods and paid salaries in line with the salary scales of the other United Nations agencies for this category but including health insurance, life insurance and other advantages that would make these positions attractive. The authority for hiring such National Professional Officers (NPOs) should also be delegated to the directors/heads of the field offices, as is the case with consultants. The recruitment of Professionals from the region to serve in regional and subregional offices on similar terms should be examined.

8. We recommend that Professional staff transferred to field offices be chosen from the most competent and experienced staff at Headquarters. In future, the majority of UNESCO staff members and specialists should ideally have both Headquarters and field experience. A policy of rotation between Headquarters and the field should be applied, to this end. Field experience should be an important factor in staff evaluation and promotion.

9. We recommend that, given consensus on the new decentralization policy, periodic visits of appropriate Headquarters staff to the field offices should be intensified in order to see how decentralization is progressing. We further recommend that an in-depth evaluation be carried out, region by region, of each and every UNESCO field office by teams composed jointly of staff with experience in the region and independent consultants, whose terms of reference would be:

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(a) to examine on the spot the nature of the office's mandate, structure, functioning, working methods and staff situation in the context of the priority objectives identified;

(b) to evaluate the means at its disposal for accomplishing the tasks assigned to it;

(c) to observe the degree of decentralization achieved;

(d) to recommend, as appropriate, in each region the restructuring or regrouping of existing units in accordance with the new decentralization policy, including the possible closure of some of them or their restructuring;

(e) to recommend the desirability or otherwise of reviving the post of Regional Co-ordinator, at least for some regions;

(f) to evaluate the effectiveness of communication linkages and measures for sharing information with UNESCO's partners within the Member States.

Field offices should participate in these evaluation exercises which should also include Headquarters services and units which are concerned with decentralization. These in-depth evaluations undertaken in consultation with the host country and the countries concerned would inter alia enable the Director-General to negotiate the restructuring or closure of these offices, as and where advisable.

SECTION III: Recommendations concerning the support that Headquarters should provide for decentralization

1. As the field offices take on more programme tasks, the chain of command to Headquarters should underscore the programme aspect of their work while continuing to provide the necessary co-ordination for the administrative tasks without, of course, prejudicing powers and functions delegated to them.

2. The working group considers that there is a need - both at Headquarters and in the field - for streamlining the role and responsibilities, as regards decentralization, assigned to the Bureau for Co-ordination of Field Units (BFC) bearing in mind the fact that BFC was set up to support the decentralization policy by means of practical measures.

3. **We recommend the reinforcement of systematic participation by field offices in the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents. This participation should be a reality and not simply a matter of form.** In this regard, the group recommends that field offices be informed in good time of the steps being taken in the preparation of such documents, starting at the stage when the Director-General makes preliminary proposals, so that they may make their contribution in sufficient time to enable Headquarters to take them into account, and Headquarters should in turn send comments on those contributions back to the field offices as part of an indispensable feedback loop.

4. **Headquarters should improve the quality and timeliness of its replies to field offices.** Only in this way will it be possible to establish a constructive and rewarding dialogue between Headquarters and its field offices and thereby overcome the sense of isolation felt by some of the latter. Dialogue will be achieved not by demanding more and more reports but by keeping them to a reasonable number and taking steps to ensure that they

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are read and commented on by Headquarters. For example, the six-monthly reports that directors of field units send to Headquarters should be commented on by Headquarters - and their comments should be sent to the directors concerned without delay.

5. The sectors at Headquarters should reinforce the participation of the field offices in the preparation and implementation of the regional and subregional 'Programme Execution Plans' (PEPs).

6. Given the priority nature of field activities, which should be preserved as far as possible, whenever budget reductions are decided, Headquarters should not cancel programmes or projects, nor should it freeze Professional or support posts, without previously informing and consulting the field offices.

SECTION IV: Specific administrative and financial recommendations

1. **The director of a regional or subregional office should assume authority over and responsibility for all staff, programmes and projects assigned to it, irrespective of the Headquarters sector from which resources are obtained.** Accordingly, there should be a single budget for administrative costs for each office under the overall authority of the director. It is noted that such a measure is foreseen by DDG/M/91/Memo 236 for the next biennium. Measures should be pursued with a view to facilitating the day-to-day administrative machinery, such as a simplified coding structure. This will enhance the degree of autonomy required for a successful operation of field activities.

2. **The key to successful decentralization lies in sound administrative and financial management of field offices.** We therefore recommend that the Director-General review current arrangements for all field offices and appoint competent administrative officers (AOs) to deal efficiently with administrative and financial matters in those offices that have significant budgetary and staffing responsibilities. The officers in question should be thoroughly familiar with Headquarters administrative and financial procedures, which means that they should have had at least a few years' experience at Headquarters before being transferred to the field office. The AOs assigned to these offices should have experience in handling both regular and extra-budgetary programmes.

3. Headquarters should delegate to field offices sufficient authority to enable them to discharge in full the duties assigned to them and to take decisions in the field within the general context of the aims being pursued through delegated activities and projects. Such a delegation of authority would be a token of the confidence that Headquarters should place in the directors of the offices. Bearing in mind the need for sound management of field offices through adequate delegation of authority and resources, requiring in turn accountability both of a technical and financial nature based on an effective reporting and information system, the Director-General should ensure that the measures introduced for these purposes by Administrative Circulars Nos. 1741 and 1742 of 30 October 1990 are fully implemented. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that under the decentralization policy the responsibility of the directors or chiefs of field offices will be enhanced, since they will all represent UNESCO both intersectorally and as a whole in their relations with States and other organizations. Confidence is therefore of the essence.

4. **The directors of field offices must be informed fully and in good time of anything involving UNESCO in the country, subregion or region in which they operate.** We strongly recommend that they be advised of all Headquarters

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missions, all contacts and all negotiations being conducted. Nothing undermines the authority and credibility of directors more than a situation in which the national authorities know what UNESCO is doing before they do. Moreover, decentralization should bring about a situation in which Regional Offices take responsibility for a larger number of missions in their own regions thus reducing the need for missions to be dispatched from Headquarters. The new system of bimonthly plans for field missions might help to overcome these problems.

5. It would also be advisable for OPI to send the field offices more information and publicity hand-outs on UNESCO programmes for distribution to the media and through educational networks. The aim will be to ensure that UNESCO becomes increasingly well known in each Member State. It is also important that National Commissions and field offices should send OPI information (in the form of texts, photos, videos, etc.) which could be distributed in other world regions.

6. The Participation Programme, in full or in part, could usefully be decentralized particularly in so far as national and subregional requests are concerned. To this end, apart from informing field units systematically about the approval of all requests submitted by the Member States covered by field units, the possibility should be studied of gradually involving field offices in the evaluation and approval of such requests, taking into account their capacity and competence. This should form part of the efforts to respond more rapidly and efficiently to requests made by Member States under this programme. We also recommend that the payment of funds under the Participation Programme to national institutions should be effected in accordance with the instructions of the Member State in whose territory they are situated. Such payments should not be sent through UNDP where a UNESCO field office in that country has the administrative and financial capacity to effect them.

7. UNFPA projects should also be completely decentralized where possible.

8. The field offices should have an adequate operational budget covering, among other things, the cost of maintaining premises, if this is not borne by the host country. This budget should be separate from the funds provided by the sectors, which are intended for programme activities.

9. In the distribution of support costs, no efforts should be spared to strengthen the involvement of field offices in the participation of extra-budgetary activities, commensurate with their growing responsibilities. The regulation allocating to field offices at least 50 per cent of the overheads from extra-budgetary projects (other than UNDP-financed) executed by them should be applied equally to all field offices. For the distribution of overheads earned on the execution of UNDP projects executed by field units, reinforced emphasis should be given to the application of the same principle. In all cases, the sharing of overheads between units at Headquarters and in the field should be decided in such a manner that their actual responsibilities and achievements are taken fully into consideration.

10. The field offices should also have adequate funds specifically to cover travel by their directors to countries to which they are accredited as UNESCO representatives. The directors should be able to make such visits as representatives at least twice a year to each Member State to which they are accredited.

11. Income from sales of their own publications should remain in the offices to strengthen the publications aspect. For some of those offices such income is at present remitted to Headquarters, which does not always allocate sufficient funds to the offices under that heading, with the result that the

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offices are obliged to use extra-budgetary funds for their publications. If not already existing, appropriate arrangements should be made to provide adequate resources to the offices to cover the costs they incur in undertaking sales of Headquarters publications. The cost of publications printed by the Regional Office at the behest of Headquarters should be reimbursed to the former.

12. The size of the imprest account should be proportional to the activities delegated. Another aspect to be considered in regard to determining the ceiling of the imprest account is the constant fluctuation in currency values. To this end, we approve of the current system whereby imprest ceilings are established on the basis of the average of two and a half months expected expenditure and recommend that these ceilings should be regularly revised and adjusted to changing circumstances. In addition special advances should be made as required to ensure that specific activities and projects can be implemented efficiently, bearing in mind the need to avoid dispersal of the cash resources of the Organization and the risks of losses on exchange from excessive holdings of national currencies.

13. The need for timely reporting of field office expenditure and the recording thereof in the Headquarters accounts are essential for the overall financial management of the Organization. Field offices should keep their accounting systems up to date in order to monitor their own budgets, financial commitments and bank accounts. If this is done expenditure reports could be sent in accordance with prevailing instructions within ten working days after the end of each month to allow timely replenishment from Headquarters. Where certain vouchers or receipts cannot be sent before the prescribed reporting deadline, the field office should explain the problem and in such circumstances Headquarters should not delay replenishments. Headquarters should continue the current practice of replenishing any field offices that experience delays with the diplomatic pouch service, on the basis of a telex or electronic message confirming dispatch of the imprest report. Moreover, as currently envisaged, a system of auto-replenishment should be introduced on an experimental basis for offices that report in a timely and disciplined manner, whereby a zero-balance facility is opened giving the office limited but adequate direct access to cash resources in a central Headquarters bank account.

14. Within the budgetary limits laid down, the directors of field offices should enjoy ample latitude to authorize travel and missions for staff from their offices within the region or subregion concerned, a copy of the authorization being sent to Headquarters. To this end the provisions of Administrative Circular No. 1742 of 30 October 1990 which clarified and confirmed such delegation of powers to field offices, should be fully implemented.

15. All matters relating to appointments and training of local support staff (General Service) should be decentralized.

16. The sums directors may spend locally without prior authorization from Headquarters should be reviewed in the light of the general increase in costs. The ceiling for the purchase of local equipment should likewise be reviewed. For the time being, Administrative Circular No. 1742 of 30 October 1990 which doubled the ceiling for the purchase of local equipment to $20,000 per item should continue.

17. Field offices in conjunction with National Commissions can play an important part in publicizing post vacancies, in close co-ordination with national authorities. We recommend that they maintain a roster of possible

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local candidates for Professional posts at UNESCO and that such a roster be communicated, periodically, to the Recruitment Section of PER in order to be incorporated in the Central Roster.

18. We consider that many of the current problems and delays in administrative and financial matters in the field may be largely overcome when field offices are linked up to the Headquarters mainframe computer, since this will give them direct access to the financial and administrative data stored in it and make it easier for them to base their commitments on updated budgetary data. **We therefore recommend that every possible effort be made to speed up this vital connection, which will be a key factor in the decentralization process.** We also recommend support for the efforts of Headquarters in developing the Information Exchange System and the Regional Management Data Bases. Furthermore, we view with great interest the promising outlook for information exchange offered by the fully operational UNESCO Clearing-House.

19. We recommend that the Secretariat should endeavour to develop models based on experience with a few selected offices, to allow the analysis of the cost/benefits of decentralization and to determine model(s) best suited to each region.

SECTION V: Specific recommendations concerning the role of the National Commissions in decentralization

1. The National Commissions should be among the main actors in the decentralization process, duly strengthened by their Member States and supported by UNESCO, as stated in Recommendation No. 8 in Section I. Collaboration and mutual support between National Commissions, through bilateral agreements or other arrangements, should also be encouraged.

2. We believe that new UNESCO regional structures are not needed in some regions that are close to Headquarters. In those regions the National Commissions are the obvious interlocutors of Headquarters.

3. Taking into consideration the Charter of National Commissions, we recommend that the National Commissions take on the role of implementing a range of programme activities or to serve as intermediaries between Headquarters and other parties that could assume responsibility for the execution of such activities, including universities, NGOs and UNESCO Clubs, and the intellectual community.

4. While recognizing that it is up to each Member State to define the structure of its own National Commission, we recommend the adoption of the interministerial structure suggested by UNESCO's Constitution. In the light of the experience of some countries with that structure, it might be desirable for other countries to reconsider the present dependence of their Commission on a single ministry and to associate it more closely with their ministries of foreign affairs, planning and multilateral co-operation, thereby giving it access to decisions concerning the distribution of external co-operation activity.

5. UNESCO's field offices should improve their co-ordination and information relations with the National Commissions. Headquarters, moreover, should provide them with timely information on missions, projects and other activities in their respective countries. The Secretaries of Commissions should be given the opportunity to visit Headquarters on some regular basis so as to familiarize themselves further with the running of the Organization and to promote greater co-operation from UNESCO for their countries.

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6. National Commissions should be informed by Member States of the requests they submit under the Participation Programme. They should also be informed of the decisions made on those requests, in common with UNESCO's field units.

7. UNESCO should promote closer contacts between National Commissions in one and the same region or subregion in an effort to promote greater participation in the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents, and for the framing of regional and subregional policies. It would be sound practice for them to meet as frequently as possible under UNESCO's auspices, and their meetings could be co-ordinated by the UNESCO offices in their region or subregion.

SECTION VI: Recommendations relating to relations between UNDP and UNESCO in the field

1. In view of the marked decrease in UNESCO participation in the implementation of UNDP-financed operational projects, and given the reports the working group received concerning the low level of field participation UNDP Resident Representatives accord to UNESCO in the programming of those projects, we recommend that relations between UNDP and UNESCO be reviewed at the highest possible level so that they may be clarified and made more constructive, with an undertaking by both agencies to give specific instructions on the matter to their field representatives in the interest of better results.

2. We recommend that Member States truly desiring greater UNESCO participation in UNDP projects should make this desire abundantly clear in the UNDP Governing Council and when drawing up their respective country programmes. UNDP should be asked to raise the level of the country IPF so as to provide more funding to projects related to UNESCO's fields of competence according to priority areas of the governments.

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ANNEX 3

ILO CIRCULAR ON MOBILITY OF STAFF BETWEEN FIELD AND HEADQUARTERS ASSIGNMENTS.

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ILO CIRCULAR

Series: 6 - PERSONNEL **No.:** 479

Distribution: A[1] **Date:** 15.4.92

Mobility of staff between field and headquarters assignments

1. The new directions of ILO programmes call for changes and adjustments in relations between the field and headquarters. A more active dialogue between the Office and ILO constituents has become necessary. ILO services at the national level will move progressively from a project orientation to a programme based approach. More effective and quicker service to constituents will require a strengthening of field programmes and increased integration of programmes in the field and those carried out in headquarters. It is essential that ILO staff, whether in headquarters or in the field, have a good understanding of work at the national level. Similarly, ILO staff need experience at headquarters to keep abreast of new policy directions, of changes in technical orientations, which affect the capacity of the ILO to provide services, and to gain a fuller understanding of the ILO's tripartite foundation. Sufficient opportunities exist, both in administrative and in technical areas, to enable most officials to have at least one assignment in the field, and for those who have spent most of their careers in the field to have an equal opportunity to serve at headquarters. Field service should be a coherent part of career planning and career development. I have therefore decided to issue new policy guidelines and instructions to facilitate the rotation of staff, which are set out below. This circular updates and replaces Circular Series 6, No. 180, entitled "Transfer of Staff Between Geneva and the Field". It does not apply to technical cooperation experts.

General principles

2. Service both at headquarters and in the field is essential for officials in the Professional category in most areas of work. Such service will be a prerequisite for virtually all management positions at headquarters. The Director-General will exercise judgment in deciding on senior and management appointments so as not to penalise officials who have not had reasonable opportunities for field service. Field service is also important for Professional jobs at other levels and will be taken into account in the selection criteria for all relevant jobs.

3. Professional staff in the field should have headquarters experience. Headquarters experience will normally be a prerequisite for appointment to Professional category posts in the field, except in genuine technical co-operation projects funded from extra-budgetary sources.

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4. Under Article 1.9 of the Staff Regulations, the Director-General has the authority to assign staff to jobs at headquarters or in the field in the interests of the Office. Without prejudice to this underlying authority, the officials concerned will be consulted on transfers between duty stations, and for jobs within its terms of reference, the Selection Board will be consulted.

5. Personal considerations such as family-related matters will be taken into account by the Office in decisions concerning the planning and timing of rotation.

6. In accordance with article 4.3 of the Staff Regulations, rotation does not apply to General Service and local staff. However, separate measures will be explored to facilitate short-term assignments in the field and at headquarters as part of staff training and career development.

Specific measures

7. All officials newly appointed to the Professional category will normally be assigned initially to headquarters. Those with career expectations will be clearly informed that field service will be required. Every effort will be made to give them a field assignment within three to five years of joining the ILO.

8. A series of measures will be introduced to facilitate the implementation of the rotation policy. These will include:

(a) monitoring of vacancies in the field and in headquarters, posting of prospective vacancies and monitoring requests for transfers between duty stations, to enable a smooth planning of transfers. Plans for the movement of staff between duty stations should be part of the on going staffing reviews carried out by the Personnel Department. To the extent possible, plans should be established well in advance, say one year, to enhance career planning as well as to enable the identification of positions for officials completing field assignments.

(b) serving Professional officials, and in particular those who have many years of ILO service ahead of them, will be strongly encouraged to seek field assignments;

(c) proposals for transfer within grade without the need for an internal competition will be made to the Selection Board for appropriate vacancies at headquarters to enable officials to return after a field assignment. P/DEV will present an analysis of staff due for transfer to ensure that claims of all field staff wishing a transfer are properly considered by the Board;

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(d) field vacancies will normally be filled by competition or by transfer in the same grade, and in the case of management positions, by calls for candidatures. This does not preclude the possibility of selecting an official directly for a field assignment if necessary in the interests of the Office;

(e) programme managers will be requested to review with the Personnel Department any recommendation that might lead to recruitment, in order to ensure that the vacancy cannot be filled by a serving official, either at headquarters or in the field;

(f) programme managers will be requested to review with each official, during the biennial review or during the performance appraisal, possibilities for field assignments. Brief summaries of these discussions should accompany the submission of the biennial review or the performance appraisal to P/DEV;

(g) the normal length of service in a field assignment will be from three to five years.

9. Where rotation to the field through direct selection entails an assignment to a job at a higher grade than that of the official, the official will normally receive a special allowance. Subject to a positive assessment of performance after a period of one year, the higher grade will be confirmed and the official will retain this grade upon transfer to headquarters.

10. Depending on the nature of the assignment and its relevance to ILO objectives and programmes, assignments to technical cooperation projects or field assignments with other UN agencies may count as field service for the purposes of this circular. Officials on such assignments will revert to their previous grades upon return to headquarters, unless they win a competition at a different grade.

Supportive and practical measures

11. To encourage rotation and to place it firmly within the context of career planning, a service of individual consultations and counselling will be developed. A mobility and career development officer will be appointed in P/DEV. This officer will provide information and guidance on field and headquarters assignments and will assist with planning careers, taking into account practical problems and issues related to family responsibilities, such as the education of children, that may arise.

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